THE RELIGIOUS STOIC:

Or a ſhort

DISCOURSE

ON

Theſe ſeveral SUBJECTS,

VIZ.

Of Atheiſm. Superſtition. Worlds Creation.
Eternity, Providence, Theology.
Strickneſs of Churches. Of the Scriptures.
Of the Moral and Judicial Law.
Of Monſters. Of Man and his Creation.
Of the Immortality of the Soul.
Of Faith and Reaſon.
Of the Fall of Angels, and what their ſin was.
Of Mans Fall. Of the Stile of *Geneſis*
Why Man Fell.
A Refutation of the *Millinaries*, &c.

With a Friendly

ADDRESS to the PHANATICS

OF ALL

SECTS and SORTS.

By Sir *GEORGE MACKENZIE*

Ye men of Gallile, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven.
Act. 1. 11.

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THE STOICS FRIENDLY ADDRESS TO THE PHANATICS Of all SECTS and SORTS.

THE *mad-cap Zealots of this Bigot Age, intending to mount Heaven, Elias-like, in Zeals fiery Chariot, do, like fooliſh* Phaeton, *not only fall themſelves from their flaming ſeat, but, by their furious over-driving, invelop the World in unquenchable Combuſtions; and when they*

have ſet the whole Globe on a blaze, this they term a new Light. *It is remarkable in Scripture, that* Jehu, *who drove furiouſly, and called up* Jehonadab *to ſee what zeal he had for the houſe of God, we as even at that inſtant, doing it more wrong than ever was done to it by unconcerned* Gallio, *who ſtantingly cared for none of theſe things. And that none of all the Apoſtolic Conclave deſired ever fire might rain from above upon mis-believers; except the Sons of* Zebedee; *who immediately thereafter, arrived at that pitch of Vanity, as to deſire to ſit in Heaven upon Chriſt's right and left hand. And that* Peter, *who was the firſt who drew a Sword in his Maſters quarrel, was likewiſe the firſt who denyed him. Fiery Zeal blows ſoon up ſuch combuſtible matter, the Sons of* Zebedee; *and that flaſh being ſpent and evaporated, a fall follows, as befell* Peter. *As that Body is hardly curable, which entertains ſuch ill-ſuited Neighbours as a cold Stomach and an hot Liver; So, the Body of*

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the visible Church may be now concluded to be in a very distempered condition, when it's Charity waxeth cold, and its Zeal hot, beyond what is due to either; and those severish fits of unnatural Zeal, wherewith the Church is troubled in it's old and cold Age, betokens too much that it draws near it's last period.

The unconsiderableness likewise of our difference, and inconsideratness wherewith they are pursued, induces me to believe, that the Zeal now A-la-mode, *is not that Holy Fire which is kindled by a Coal from the Altar; but is that* ignis fatuus, *or wild-fire, which is but a Meteor piec'd up of Malignant Vapors, and is observed to frequent Churchyards oftner than other places.*

I am none of those who acknowledge no Temples, *besides those of their own Heads. And I am of Opinion, that such as think that they have a Church within their own Breasts, should likewise believe their heads are Steeples, and so should provide them with Bells. I*

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believe that there is a Church-militant, which, like the Ark muſt lodge in its Bowels all ſuch as are to be ſaved from the flood of condemnation: but, to chalk out its bordering lines, is beyond the Geography of my Religion. He was infallible who compared God's Spirit to the Wind that bloweth where it liſteth; we hear the ſound of it, but know not whence it comes, or whither it goeth. *And the Name graven upon the White ſtone, none knows but he who hath it.* Eli *concluded* Hannah *to be drunk, when ſhe was pouring out her Soul before her Maker: and* Elias *believed, that the Church, in his days, was ſtinted to his own Perſon; and yet* God *told him, that there were* 7000. *in* Iſrael *who had not bowed their knees to* Baal: *why then ſhould any private Chriſtian determine Magiſterially, that wherein the greateſt of Prophets erred?*

The reed wherewith the Temple was to be meaſured Rev. 11. 2. *was only entruſted to an Angel; and yet he had not in Commiſſion* to meaſure the Court that was with-

without, becauſe it was given to the Gentiles. *And albeit*, Rev. 7. *the number of the Jews who were ſaved is determined; yet, the number of* Gentiles *is left indefinite, and ſaid to be numberleſs.*

There is nothing more ordinary, than for each Nation to confine the Church within themſelves. And in that Nation again, one corner will have themſelves the Sanctum Sanctorum *of that only Temple; albeit our Saviour in his Goſpel aſſures us, that men ſhall come from all corners of the World, and ſit down with* Abraham, Iſaac & Jacob. *And* John *in his* Revelation *tells us, that Multitudes of all Nations, Kindreds and Families, were ſeen following the Lamb. Upon this ſame block do thoſe likewiſe ſtumble, who put the bolt of their uncharitableneſs upon the Gates of Heaven, to debar whole Profeſſions, ſuch as Lawyers and Phyſitians, from entring in thereat; notwithſtanding that the above cited place tells us, that there were only* 1200. *of the Tribe of* Levi *the Prieſt-choſen, and the like number was prick'd in the Tribe of* Judah, *the Lawgiver:* Aaron *the Prieſt*

did mold the golden Calf, and not Moſes *the Judge; and* Korah *and* Dathan *were Levites, and yet mutined againſt their Magiſtrates.*

I ſay not this to diſparage that holy Function: For none ſhall wiſh Aaron's *rod to flouriſh more than my ſelf; and ordinarily, thoſe who love not to touch the Lord's annointed, will likewiſe be ſure, to do his Prophets no harm; but, I ſay it to take off an aſperſion which hath ſtain'd too long, and too unjuſtly, thoſe of my own Profeſſion. Is not the Church our common Mother? albeit, I confeſs, ſhe is like-wiſe their Nurſe, in a more particular way; and ſince there is Heavenly* Mannah *enough to aliment us all, why ſhould Chriſtians deny to admit their Brethren to an equal partage?*

It grieves me ſore to ſee my Mother, the Church, tortur'd, like Rebecca, *by carrying ſtrugling Twins in her pained Bowels. And ſeeing all Chriſtians are but Pilgrims here, I admire that thoſe Pilgrims ſhould leave off to journey, and ſtand skirmiſhing and fighting with*

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all such as will not travel their Road. And albeit we acknowledge, that the Spirit of God takes pains, and is sufficient for leading all men in the way wherein they should walk; yet, we must compell them, as if either He needeed our help, or we resolved to share with him the Glory of their Conversion. Thus God (who loves us all infinitely better than any one of us doth another) leaves us, upon our own hazard, a freedom in our choice, albeit we poor Miscreants compell one another, denying to our fellow-creatures that freedom which he allows all the Creation. I wish we would consider how each man eats, drinks, cares for his family, and performs all common dutys, rationally enough without any compulsion; and yet, in the affaires of Religion, wherein doubtless man is led by a far more infallible assistance, there are many slips committed, dayly and grosly, notwithstanding all pains taken, and force used by one man towards another. Thus it fares with us as with Patients, whom when the Phy-

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tian ſtints to a narrow dyet, then they loath even that food, which their unreined Appetite would never have rejected. And this makes me apt to believe, that if Laws and Law-givers did not make Heretics vain, by taking too much notice of their extravagancys, the World ſhould be no no more troubled with theſe, than they are with the Chimera's of Alchymiſts *and* Philoſophers. *And it fares with them, as with Tops, which, how long they are ſcourged, keep foot and run pleaſantly, but fall how ſoon they are neglected and left to themſelves.*

In order to which it was wittily obſerved by our great King James *the Sixth, that the Puritans of his Age ſtrove with him, and yet ceded at firſt, in a difference between them and the Shoe-makers of* Edingburg: *For, not only pleaſes it their humor to contend where they gain honor and can loſe none, but likewiſe, by conteſting with Monarchs, they magnifie to the People their pious Courage: aſſuring the World, that ſuch attempts require a particular aſſiſtance from Hea-*

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ven; and when their jangling hath extorted some concessions from the Magistrate, (as ordinarily it doth) then they press that successes as an infallible mark of the Jure-divinoship of their quarrel. Albeit, I confess, that when these, not only recede from the Canonized Creed of the Church, but likewise incroach upon the Laws of the State, then, as of all others, they are the most dangerous; so, of all others, they should be most severely punished.

Opinion, kept within its proper bounds, is a pure act of the mind: and so it would appear, that to punish the body for that which is a guilt of the Soul, is as unjust as to punish one relation for another. And this blood-thirsty zeal, which hath reigned in our Age, supposes our most merciful God to be of the same temper with those Pagan Deities, who desired to have their Altars gored with blood; and being Devils themselves, delighted in the destruction of men: whereas the Almighty, who delights not in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live,

hath

hath left no Warrant upon holy Record, for perſecuting ſuch as diſſent from us; but even then when He commands that the Prophets, who tempt other to Idolatry, ſhould be ſlain; yet, ſpeaks He nothing of puniſhing of thoſe who are ſeduced by them. And why ſhould we ſhew ſo much Violence in thoſe things whereof we can ſhew no certain Evidence? as ordinarily we cannot in circumfundamental Debates. Are we not ready to condemn to day, as Phanatic, what yeſterday was judged Jure-divino? *And do not even thoſe who perſecuted others for their Opinions, admire why they ſhould be, upon that ſcore,* Perſecuted themſelves? *So that (Victory depending upon event) we legitimate the Perſecutions, to be uſed by others, againſt our ſelves, by the Perſecutions uſed by our ſelves, againſt others. Our Saviour forbids us to pluck up the tares, leaſt the Wheat be pulled up with it; and how can the moſt pious Perſecutors know, that the Saints are not deſtroyed with the Sinners?*

It is remarkable, that our Saviour diſarmed zealous Peter, *even when he was*

ſerving

ſerving Him in Perſon, in His greateſt ſtraits, and againſt the proſligat of His Enemies, the Jews: and that to prevent the irregular zeal, even of the firſt and beſt of Chriſtians, the bleſſed Apoſtles, their divine Maſter thought it fit to arm them; not with Swords, but with Scrips, and to root out of their hearts all thoughts of violence, did oft inculcate to them, that His Kingdom was not of this World; convincing them by an excellent Argument, that He had no need of Armes, or Armyes; for elſe He could have commanded thouſands of Angels: Did ever God command the Jewes to War againſt any neighboring Nation becauſe they were Pagans (a quarrel which would have laſted till all the World had been conquered) Or, did our Savior leave in Legacy to his Servants, that they ſhould force others to turn Proſelytes; which doubtleſſe he had done, if he had reſolved to allow ſuch a crude means of Converſion. All which makes me admire, why, in our late troubles, men really Pious, and naturally ſober, could

could have been ſo tranſported, as to deſtroy whom they could not convince, and to perſuade thoſe who were convinced, that Religion obliged them to deſtroy others.

My heart bleeds when I conſider how ſcaffolds were dyed with Chriſtian blood, and the fields covered with the Carcaſſes of murthered Chriſtians; and its probable, that there were more damned by unprepared deaths, in the fields, than were ſaved by peeping Sermons in incendiary Churches; and in this, I admire the Clemency of our Royal Maſter, who, albeit His cauſe was more juſt than theirs, albeit He might have convinced them by obtruding to them their own Practiſes: yet, hath rather choſen to command with His Scepter than His Sword. But, if the glory of God were the mark at whith theſe do level, why beſtow they not their zeal, rather in Converting ſuch as ſcarce know or acknowledge that there is a God? And why are they more enraged againſt thoſe who agree with them in moſt things, than theſe who diſſent from them in all?

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Take not Christians more pains to refute one another, than to convince Gentiles? And ſtand not ſome Epiſcopiſts and Presbyterians at greater diſtance, than either do with Turks and Pagans? And to evidence, that rather Humor than Piety occaſions our difference, we may eaſily perceive, that the meaner the Subject is, the heat is always the greater.

If I had ever known ſo much as one whoſe faith had been the Trophy of a debate, I ſhould allow of debates in matters of Religion: But ſeeing men cannot be convinced by Miracles, it were ridiculous to preſe Converſion by Arguments. All the Divines in Europe *could not preſs the beſt founded of their Controverted and polemic truths, with ſo much Scripture, or ſo many Miracles as our bleſſed Saviour did His own divinity (which is the foundation of all Truths) And yet the Jews and almoſt all the world beſides, ſlighted this infallible Doctrine; And to evidence that there is a ſeaſon of*

of Grace, independent from Arguments, did not many thouſands turn Proſelytes at Peters ſermon; whom all our Saviours Homilies and Miracles could not perſuade? If one ſhould ſay, that the teſtimony of a few Fiſher-men ſhould not be believed in a matter of ſo great conſequence, as is the Salvation of the whole World; eſpecially when they did depone as Witneſſes, in a matter wherein both their honor and livelyhood was concerned, might not this ſtagger ſome mean Chriſtians? And yet I believe theſe Truths ſo much the more, becauſe ſuch as theſe were its firſt aſſerters; for, certainly it is one of the greateſt of Miracles, that ſo few, and ſo illiterate perſons were able to convince the whole world. Thus we ſee, that one may account that a Miracle, which another looks upon as a folly; and yet none but God's Spirit can decide the Controverſie. Matters of Religion and Faith, reſembling ſome curious Pictures, and Optick Priſmes, which ſeem to change ſhapes and colors, according to the ſeveral ſtances from which the aſpicient views them.

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The ballance of our judgments hath catched such a bruise by Adams *fall, that scarce can we, by them, know the weight of any argument. But, which is worse, there is as great a defect in our partial weighing, as in the scales themselves: For, when we take either the* pro *or* con *of any Controversie into our Patronage, we throw always in Arguments into that scale, wherein our own Opinion lyes; without ever taking leisure to conclude what may be alledged for the antipode Proposition: and then, when we receive an answer, our invention is busied, not in pondering how much conviction it hath in it, but by what slight it may be answered; and thus either passion, interest or frequent meditation, are still the weights which cast the Ballance.*

This fiery Zeal hath likewise made another pimple flash out in the face of the Phanatick Church, and that is, a conceit that the Saints have the only right to all God's Creatures, the Wicked being only Usurpers and not Masters of them.

But I have heard this Opinion (ſo beaſtly is it) confuted by Balaam's *Aſſe, who could tell it's Maſter,* Am not I thine own Aſſe? *When* Aaron *and the people did Covenant without* Moſes, *then every man did bring his ear-rings to make up the Golden Calf. And we have lived in an Age, wherein we have ſeen our Countrey-men, like the* Chaldeans, *take the furniture both of the Temple and of the King's Houſe, and carry them away to their* Babylon *of confuſions; and in an Age wherein ſober men were forced to lend monies, to buy for their own Arms the heavy ſhackles of ſlavery,*

Tantum Religio potuit ſuadere malorum.

Religion doubtleſs aims at two great deſigns; one is like the firſt Table, to perſuade us to adore God Almighty. Another is to perſuade us, like to the ſecond Table, to love our Neighbour, and to be a mean to ſettle all theſe jealouſies,

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and compesce all these animosities which interest might occasion: and this appears by the Doxology *jubilyed by the Angels at our Saviour's birth*, Glory to God, and peace and good-will towards men. *And therefore, as every private Christian should be tolerated by his fellow-subjects, to worship God inwardly according to his Conscience; So all should conspire in that exteriour uniformity of Worship, which the Laws of his Countrey injoyn. The first remark which God made of us after the Creation, was that* it was not fit for man to be alone; *there was only one Ark amongst the Jews by Gods own appointment. And seeing the Gospel terms the Church Christ's Spouse, it were absurd to think that He will divorce from her upon every error or escape; especially, seeing His blessed mouth hath told us, that under the Gospel it is not lawful to divorce upon all occasions; and if He will not, for these deny her to be His Spouse, much lesse should we deny her to be our Mother. May not one, who is convinced in his judgment,*

that Monarchy is the beſt of Governments live happily in Venice *or* Holland *? And that Travailer were abſurd, who would rather ſquable with theſe amongſt whom he ſojourns, then obſerve theſe Rites and Solemnities which are required by the Laws of the places where he lives ? What is once ſtatuted by a Law, we all conſent to, in chooſing Comiſſioners to repreſent us in theſe Parliaments where the Laws are made; and ſo if they ordain us to be decimated, or to leave the Nation if we conform not, we cannot ſay, when that Law is put to execution, that we are oppreſt; no more then we could complain, if one did remove us legally from theſe Lands which he purchaſed from our Truſtee, whom we had impowred to ſell it.*

As David *ſaid to* Saul, 1 Sam. 26. 20. *Why went the King out to catch a Flea ? So may I ſay to our great Divines, Why contravert they about ſhadows ? Is it fit that Chriſtians, who find it too great a task to govern their private Souls, ſhould be ſo much concerned*

cerned how the Church is governed by others? Wherefore, seeing many have been saved who were most inexpert in these questions, and that foolish zeal, passion, and too much curiositie therein, hath damned many, I may conclude, that to pry into these, is neither necessary, because of the first, nor expedient, because of the last.

Since discretion opened my eyes, I have always-judg'd it necessary for a Christian, to look oftner to his Practice of Piety, *than to* Confession of Faith; *and to fear more the crookedness of his* will, *than the blindness of his* judgment *delighting more to walk on from grace to grace, working out the work of his own salvation with fear and trembling, than* to stand still *with the* Galileans *curiously gazing up to heaven. True Religion and undefiled is to visit the Widow and the Fatherlesse; and the dittay drawn up against the damned spirits shall be, That when our Saviours poor ones were hungry, they did not feed them; when they were naked, they did not cloath them; without mentioning any thing of their un-*

belief in matters of Controverſie, or Government. And therefore I hope, that theſe to whom I addreſs my ſelf in this Diſcourſe, will rather believe me to be their friend, becauſe of their Piety, than their enemy, becauſe of their Errors.

THE VIRTUOSO, OR STOICK.

CHAP. I.

Of Atheisme.

ALbeit Man be but a Statue of dust kneaded with tears, moved by the hid Engines of his restless Passions, a clod of Earth, which the shortest Fever can burn to Ashes, and the least shower of Rhumes wash away to no-

thing; Yet makes he as much noiſe in the world, as if both the Globes (thoſe glorious Twins) had been unwombed from that formleſs Choas, by the Midwifry of his wit; he ſpeakes thunder, looks lightnings, breathes ſtorms, and, by the Eloquence of his own Vanity, perſuades himſelf that his commands are able to unhinge the Poles. From which boundleſs pride, I confidently conclude, that if a natural inſtinct, or as the Stoicks term it, προς τον θεον, had not irreſiſtibly bowed his Faith to aſſent to a Deity, he had never, neither upon deſign nor in complyance to cuſtom (as Atheiſts alledge) ſuffer'd to creep into his Creed, that there was one greater than himſelf, who could rein his Affections, and bound their affects, according to the dictates of his irreſiſtible will.

And albeit Regiments of Arguments, levyed both from the ſtately fabrick of Heavens arched Pend, and from the inimitable Embroidery of Earths flowry

flowry Boul, be requiſite for conquering the infidelity of others, and for rendering them Tributaries to that all-forming Eſſence: Yet, doth my faith render up the arms of its depraved reaſon, and turn Proſelyte to this divine truth, upon the ſole ſight of one of theſe dying Atheiſts; who, upon any ſurpriſal, do, with amazement, throw up their eyes to Heaven, as if they ſent their looks in Ambaſſage to beg aſſiſtance from thence; and cry *God ſave me*, as if theſe beaſtly ſouls, when attacqued unexpectedly, knew whence their health were to be expected: Like to other ſick Brutes, who when aſſaulted by ſickneſs, are, by the hand of that ſame ſtorge and inſtinct, led to ſome herb or flower, which is an Apothecary's ſhop appointed by nature for them.

Neither think I theſe Arguments which are twiſted together of three Propoſitions ſo ſtrong as theſe Inſtincts are; where truth, like the Sun, ſeems to dart home its light in one unperceivable

ceivable Act, whereas in these, purblind nature may be mistaken, not only judging of the Truth of either of the three parts, but likewise of their connexion and alliance. I know that that miscreant, who began his Hell upon Earth, by being burnt at *Tholouse* for Theorick Atheisme, did, upon his first approach to the Fire, cry, *O God!* Whereupon, being taxt by the assisting Jesuit, answered, that these and such like expressions were the offspring of custom. But poor Soul he might have considered, that seeing he had crept from his cradle into that error, and had run his glass to its last sand, in propagating that hellish conceit; That therefore this expression was rather a confession than an escape; rather a product of a rational soul, than of depraved custom; for as it was in it self a divine truth, so it was in him contrary to a fetled habit.

There is another Caball of Athiests, who think that this Belief was at first but

but the quaint *Leger-de-main* of some strongly-pated Statesman; who to over-awe the capriciousness of a giddy multitude, did forge this opinion of a rewarder of all humane actions: And to enforce this, do instance *Numa Pompilius*, and *Mahomet*, whose palpable Cheats grew up in their successors into Religions; and whose inventions were received with as much bigotry, by the wisest of men, as is that deity which is now the object of our adorations. Wherefore (say they) seeing the Rational Soul hath failed so oft, and so absurdly in its discoveries, how, or why should we submit our selves slavishly to its determinations? For that which doth at some times err, can never at any time be concluded infallible.

To these I answer, that albeit, as to the particular way of Worship, the world is oft-times deluded: And albeit, even as to their apprehensions of this incomprehensible Essence, multitudes be sometimes misled; Yet, these

these staggering Fancies fix this great Truth, *that there is a Supream, who must be adored*: For if this innate Instinct did not coopere with these Impostures, in gaining an assent to their fictitious Religious and Hierarchies, it were impossible for any humane Authority to establish Principles so remote from reason, and to subjugate by these, even the mildest tempers. But I take the root from which these Errors do spring, to be, that the twilight of darkened reason glimsing to man that *impressa* of the divine Image, which though much decayed, yet rests still upon his soul; and not being able, because of the faintness of his light, and the decay of that divine *impressa*, to discern exactly what that Deity is, with whose image it is signeted, believes implicitely, with a profound respect, any who hath the confidence to obtrude any knowledge of it upon them: Concluding in the conclave of their own thoughts, that none durst contemn so

far

far that omnipotent Thunder-darter, as to vend their own fancies for ſacred Oracles. And albeit theſe hood-winked Nations did erect a πανθεον in their own hearts wherein all theſe Vice-gods were worſhiped; Yet were all theſe but repreſentations of the true God; for His Omnipotency and Power was adored in their *Mars*; His omniſcience in their *Apollo*, *&c.* And it is very probable that the Heathens admired ſo each attribute of God Almighty, that they thought each deſerved diſtinct Altars; ſo that their errors had their riſe from rather too much than too little reſpect; and that as the ſame Ocean receives ſeveral names from the ſeveral ſhoars it waſhes; ſo, according to the ſeveral operations of the moſt High, did theſe deluded Pagans eſtabliſh ſeveral Deities. But that all theſe did ultimately terminate in one, is clear from the Inſcription of that Athenian Altar *To the unknown God*; from the deſignation of συμβωμοι, from their

their common feasts or διάξενα; from the adjunct of *Delphicus* given to *Apollo* which in Greek signifies *unus*; as *Macrobius* observes: from their Altars erected, *Diisque Deabusque omnibus*; and from the general invocation of all the Deities joyntly subjoyned to all their particular sacrifices. So that the great and all-comprehending *Idea*, wherein he is represented, as in one big mirror to us, was by them broke in pieces, and in each of these pieces taken alone did they see a Deity, though much abridged; Whereas all these pieces, when set together, did represent but one, and each piece did then shew but a part. But to evidence that our belief of a Deity is not a State and traditional Imposture, I would willingly know, if ever the skilfullest of Sathans emissaries was able to induce the world to believe that there was no God; which (doubtless) might have at some occasions contributed much to some mens Politick designs, and which

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that rebell would have attempted, if either God had not reſtrained him, or himſelf had not known it impreſtable. And it is moſt remarkable, that the firſt promotors of that divine Doctrine were perſons, who, both by precept and practice, decryed Ambition and declined State-imployments; and ſo it were abſurd to think that they invented theſe, in ſubordination to State Projects.

There is alſo much force in that Argument, wherein, from the Nature of Propheſying, is concluded the *Being* of a God: for, to foreſee, is doubtleſs a way of ſeeing, far above the reach of humane Nature; man not being able to conclude but that, What is poſſible upon both parts, may come to paſs upon either of its parts. And hence it was, that the Heathens themſelves termed this prediction *divination*; as if it could not be but divine. As alſo, if there were not a God, but that this were a fiction, it would follow, that error

and

and deluſion (ſuch as this *ex hypotheſi*) were able, and actually did, of all other things, frame a man's ſoul moſt to virtue: and that the beſt of men (ſuch as the adorers of a Deity) were both the greateſt cheats and block-heads. All which, are abſurdities to be hiſs'd at by all who are maſters of the meaneſt portion of human reaſon.

There lurketh much curious Contemplation in pondering, how that albeit the parents of all Heatheniſh Religions, have been incomparably the cheifeſt Wits in their times; for elſe they could not have impreſs'd the Spirits of their Diſciples with ſuch abſtract Principle: Yet all their Models ſeem repugnant to common reaſon: and they have chois'd to teach Principles which ſeem ridiculous.

Thus the Fictions related by the Poets of their Gods, the Rites uſed by the *Romans*, and the Fopperies of the *Alcoran*, are abſurdities unworthy of a rational belief; if man were not acted by an innate Principle, to place the

the Mysteries of Religion above his Reason.

By which we see, that the imputation cast upon the Scriptures of their contrariety to Reason, chocks likewise the Principles of all Nations: and certainly, if there were nothing revealed to us in Religion, but what the short line of our reason might fadom, the Omnipoteney of God, and the weakness of our own reason, should remain still unknown; and seeing our reason is only suitable to our nature; certainly if that infinite Essence and it's Mysteries might be comprehended by that same reason, which measureth things finite, we might conclude God to be finite likewise; and is it not impudence in us who know not the ebbing and flowing of the Sea, nor the reason why the *Adamant* draweth the Iron, to repine because we cannot comprehend the Essence of God Almighty? and then vainly to conclude, that because we cannot grasp within the

ſhort armes of our underſtanding, the vaſt bulk of the Deity, that there is no Deity? A concluſion as abſurd, as if one ſhould ſay, that when the nimble wings of an arrow tranſport it above our ſight, it did leave off to be, when it left off to be perceived. And I am of opinion, that myſteriouſneſs ſuits rarely well with divine Truths, the fineſt things uſing always to be beſt wrapt up: thus if we liſten to our hid inclinations, we will find a pleaſing veneration in reſerved ſilence; and our curioſity will ſwiftly follow, what by it's retiredneſs fleeth from us: ſilent groves whoſe buſh top Trees lay their heads together, as in a Conſpiracy, to reſiſt the Sun's entry, and powder its light with Sables, creats a veneration in us. And as the Heathens did chooſe Groves, So did the primitive Chriſtians light their Devotions with Torches and Candles, intimating thereby that umbrag'd ſilence was an excellent Shrine for ſincere devotions; and in this ſenſe, it may be, the Word of God

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is ſaid to be a Lantern to our ſteps; and the ſeven Churches are compared to ſeven Candleſticks. Did not our Saviour teach His Diſciples in Parables? and was not the Ark vailed from the eyes of the People? the Pagans diſpenſed their divinity in Hieroglyphicks; and amongſt humane Writers, the moſt Myſterious carry ſtill the Lawrels: And why ſhould we vainly wiſh to comprehend the nature of the Deity, ſeeing *Moſes*, Gods intimate, and minion, could not have that allowance? And God himſelf, when for our neceſſary inſtruction He would diſcover ſomething of Himſelf to us, is forced *per ἀνθρωποπάθειαν*, (as Divines ſpeak) to diſcover Himſelf in a ſtile borrowed from humane frailty, and to expreſs His infinite affections by our diſordered Paſſions.

I believe, that *Socrates*, nature's greateſt Diſciple, and the Deity's *protomartyr*, was a Proſelyte of the ſame Faith, which we profeſs, and had

his large Soul illuminated by that Sun of righteousness, whose refulgent rayes are now the bright Torches of the Christian Church. Neither is my belief in this staggered by the silence of his co-temporary Writers, as to this particular: seeing these, not being of the same persuasion with him, but being convinced of his Moral worth, did describe his opinions suitably to their own apprehension. Thus did those Pagan Historians admire the great Saviour of mankind, only for His Moral accomplishments, without reaching these divine Principles, by which He was acted. The *Stoicks* likewise were, in all probality, a tribe of *John* Baptist's, and God having resolved to purge the Universe of its Original unrighteousness by that blessed *Manna* which came down from Heaven to give life to the world, did, by their Doctrine of abstemiousness, as by a spare dyet prepare its body for receiving that divine Dose. And certainly, if men

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had disbanded that execrable Troup of Lusts, against which these preached, and had listened (as the *Stoicks* Book of Discipline injoyned) to their own private Consciences, and had, by retiredness abstracted themselves from the reach of temptations, it had facilitated much their conversion: for if the young Lawyer, who came to consult Christ how to draw up his Securitie of Heaven, and of his portion there, had believed their Oracle, which decry'd Riches as the unnecessary baggage of man's life, and the mudd which clog'd the wings of the Souls Contemplation, and kept it from soaring its Natural pitch, he had never refused our Saviour's yoke, because he was commanded to sell all and to give it to the poor. Thus likewise if the Rich Glutton had dyeted himself according to the scant prescript of their allowance, his schorched Tongue had not stood in need of a drop of Water to allay it's Thirst. Neither had *Nicodemus*

needed to have mantled himself in the darkness of the Night, when he came to our Saviour, out of fear lest he should have been discovered; seeing their Doctrine might have taught him, that *fear* was a Passion unworthy to be lodged in the Soul of man: And that there is nothing here, which a man either should, or needeth to fear.

But albeit neither *instinct* nor *Faith*, were able to convince us infallibly of this Truth; Yet is it both more satisfying, and more safe to embrace this Opinion, than its contrary. More satisfying, because mans *summum bonum* here, being lodged in the Tranquillity of his Spirit; That which can best plane and smooth the rugged and uneven face of his frequent and inevitable Misfortunes, must be doubtless the most caressable of opinions: wherefore, seeing nothing can strengthen so much mans frailty, nothing check so soon his dispair, nothing feed so much his hope,

hope, nor animate ſo much his courage, as to believe that there is a God, who beareth the heavieſt end of all our croſſes upon the ſhoulders of His *love*; who is able to turn, or arreſt the giddy wheel of fortune by the ſtrong hand of His Omnipotency; and who twiſteth Lawrels of inimaginable joyes for the heads of thoſe who fight under his banners. If a man leaned not his weary Soul upon this divine Reſt, he were not only an Enemy to Nature, but even to his own happineſs. What rocks of danger could men eſcape, if blind fortune did ſit at the helme; and if vertuous Perſons complain, as Affairs are preſently ſtated, that their Merites are not weighed with indifferency enough in the Scales of Juſtice? What might be expected, if hazzard got the ballance to manage? and thoſe who leave their Native Countries, when they perceive that the Law beginneth to render its Oracles in an unconſtant Stile, and with a

trembling voice, behooved to leave the World, if this Anarchy were by Atheisme established? For as a wise *Stoick* well observed, οὐκ ἔστι ζῆν ἐν κόσμῳ κενῷ θεοῦ, καὶ κενῷ προνοίας. *It were impossible to live in a world void of God, and void of Providence.*

It is likewise most safe; for if there be a Deity, doubtless these obdured Atheists, whose obstinacy hath conjured their consciences to a constrain'd silence and bribed these infallible Witnesses, to depone what suited best with their wild resolutions, or rather neglected resolutely their sincere depositions: then certainly, the just flames of that God's indignation, whom they have disclaimed, will heat for them a Furnace in Hell, beyond what the other damned Spirits shall meet with in their Torture: Whereas albeit there be no Tribunal, from which such a Thunder-bolt sentence may be darted, nor no supreme Judge by whom our Actions shall be canvas'd; Then those who have paid

their adorations at his Altars, ſhall be in no danger. Wherefore, ſeeing it ſhould be the task of a *Virtuoſo*, to turn out all ſuch thoughts as may raiſe a mutiny in his breaſt; it were a fooliſh toy in him to entertain Atheiſme, which is a Nurcery of diſquietneſs: for whoſe breaſt could enjoy a calme whilſt a concernment of ſo much weight as his eternal Portion, did hinge from the weak thred of a mere *may be*, and of ſuch a *may be* as marches ſo near with a *will not be*?

But if ye would know, what diſquieting vapors Atheiſme ſends up to the brain, when it is once drunk in: go to the horror-creating beds of a dying Atheiſt, whoſe roaring voice might awake the moſt lethargic Conſcience that ever the Devil lull'd aſleep: There ye ſhall know by the Urinal of his eyes, and the water ſtanding therein, what Convulſion-fits his Soul ſuffers; and ſhall learn, from his own mouth, how grievouſly his

his diſeaſed Soul is ſtretched upon the rack of diſpair: then it is that the voluminous Regiſters of his Conſcience, which did lie formerly claſp'd in ſome unſearcht corner of his memory, are laid open before him, and the Devil, who hitherto gave him the leſſening end of the Proſpect, to ſurvey his ſins in, turns now its magnifying end to this fearful eye. It ſhould be then the grand deſign of a Philoſopher, to order his own breaſt aright, before he go abroad to view the Works of the Creation; leſt if he leave its door unbolted, the Devil ſteal from him his richeſt Jewel, whileſt he ſweats to enrich his Contemplation with what is of far leſs conſequence.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of Superſtition.

IT is not wild fancy to think, that *Atheiſme* hath been the product of *Superſtition*: for certainly, many who were by humor *Gallio's*, finding that Religion exacted from men ſuch inhumane homage to its recognizance, as was the ſacrificing Children among the Heathens, wearying Pilgrimages and hectic Lents amongſt Chriſtians, did reſolve rather to deny than to adore ſuch Deities. Thus *Lucretius* revolted upon *Agamemnon's* ſacrificing his daughter *Iphigenia* for the Grecian ſafety, crying out,

Tantum Religio potuit ſuadere malorum.

And thus *Petronius Arbiter*, a Monk of the ſame Cell, ſays that,

Primus

Primus in orbe deos fecit timor.
——— Fulmina cœlo
Cum caderent ———

And to prevent this, our Saviour doth oft inculcate, that his yoak is eaſie and His burden is light. And doubtleſs, as the ſtraighteſt line is alwayes the ſhorteſt; So the moſt rational deſigns are always eaſilyeſt effectuated; and as *Seneca* hath excellently obſerved, *Licet Deus non eſſet, tamen non peccarem ob peccati vilitatem.* There is ſomething of meanneſs in the gallanteſt, and moſt alluring ſin. And this is moſt energetically expreſt in Scripture, whilſt it is ſaid *that the wicked weary themſelves by their ſins.* A Principle, which not only the Magiſterial Authority of Gods Spirit, but our experience likewiſe places above the reach of all ſcruples: for are not the Inquietudes, the Cheats, and palliated Parricides, and Sacriledges brooded by Ambition, the Churliſhneſs and Cloſe-handedneſs

dedneſs parented by Avarice, effects unworthy to be father'd upon any Rational Soul; and at which we ſhould ſcarlet our cheeks with bluſhes, as well as enpale them through fear, and ſhould ſtand as much in awe of our Conſciences, as moſt do of a Deity? Yet, it may be we are in a miſtake, whilſt we place Superſtition in the exceſs of ſuch Adorations, as are either commanded or indifferent: for ſeeing the object of our adoration, God Almighty, is, in Himſelf, infinite, we can never exceed either in our reſpects to Him, or in our Reſpects to Him, or in the expreſſions of them. Exceſs being only admiſſible, were the object is finite, and where we attribute more than is due, which can never be, here. Thus if Kneeling be lawfull at any occaſion, I hardly ſee why it is not lawful to kneel at all occaſions. And if theſe exterior Rites and Ceremonies (ſome whereof are allow'd in all Churches) be judged requiſite, for expreſſing

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our Vassalage and Subordination to God our Maker, either they are altogether unwarrantable or else we should proportion them (as far as in us lyes) to that infinite object. And seeing the Angels are said to cover their faces with their wings before Him, the Patriarches to fall upon their face and worship; and our adorable Saviour in that conflict wherein He represented sinfull man, is, by *Matthew*, remarked to have fallen upon His face; by *Mark* to have fallen upon the ground, and by *Luke* to have kneeled: What is crawling man, that he should account such gestures fond Superstition! It would appear then, that Superstition consists in mans worshipping God by means unlawfull, such as are Children-sacrifices, and such like, whereby His divine Attributes are mis-represented, and tainted with cruelty, or Tyranny; and not in an excess, in such expressions of our respect as are in themselves lawfull. And if there be any strength in that

Argument

Argument, wherein we inforce the Being of God, from the harmonious consent and assent of all Nations: certainly, by that same Argument, we may establish the decency, if not the necessity, of Ceremonies. For, what Nation bowes to Altars, without profound and external submissions? And, who lodges upon tht surface of our Globe, who payes not as the *reddendo* of their Charter to those gods whom they worship, ceremonial Adorations, wrapt up in most submissive Rites?

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Worlds Creation.

THat God made all things for His glory, is an expreſſion, which (I think) looks not well at the Teſt of reaſon, and ſeems to have no warrant but unwary cuſtome: for beyond all queſtion, His glory was ſo brim-ful formerly, that it neither needed, nor could receive any conſiderable acceſſion from this ſmall drop. And beſides this, the innate apprehenſion we have of doing any thing for one's glory, dyes this expreſſion with ſome guilt: Yet, I confeſs, we may warrantably ſay, that when perverſe man calls His Power in queſtion, or controverts His Being *only wiſe*; that then, God, for our inſtruction, and the vindication of His own glorious Attributes, doth many things for His own glory. And in this ſenſe, the

the Scripture ſaith, that God will puniſh the wicked, and deliver His people, for His own glory. And wherever it is ſaid, that God doth, or createth any thing, for His own glory, it is doubtleſs in this ſenſe; in which man (who is made after His image) may act for his own glory without any vanity; albeit to act for his own glory, in the firſt ſenſe, were in him criminal. It is then more probable, that God being infinitely good, and all good being *ſui communicativum*, that His deſign in Creating the World, was to communicate and diſplay His goodneſs: and upon this *Baſe* probably hath *Ariſtotle* reared up his Error, of *the worlds exiſtency from all Eternity*: for, ſeeing God was *ab æterno* infinitely good, and that *good* is ſtill communicative: he did (it may be) conclude, that *ab æterno*, God did communicate His goodneſs: which could only be to Creatures. And therefore it was neceſſary that there ſhould have been a World: and

some Philosophers have aver'd, that the World flowed from God *per emanationem, ab æterno*, as beams are lanced out from the body of the Sun. Albeit I be none of *Aristotle*'s Partisans, nor hold my Philosophy of him, as my Superior, Yet I cannot but think, that God hath communicated His goodness to worlds prior to ours, which seems but a conceit of 5682 years standing. But I am not so Arrogant as to determine the time of the first Worlds birth, nor how many Cadets it hath had; resolving to leave its Date, blank, to be fill'd up by some Arrogent Pretender. Neither should I accuse mine own thoughts of Heresie, for concluding, that probably there are at present thousands of Worlds co-existing with ours; whereof some, it may be are governed by Maximes, if not contrary, yet at least different from these which are our Canons. All which Worlds, albeit they were actually subsisting, would lie in the bo-

ſom of the large imaginarie Spaces, but like ſo many ſmall balls in the corner of a large Tennis-court. I ſhall not, for confirming this opinion, cite, with an ignorant French Curate, the parable of the Lepers, where it is ſaid, *Nonne ſunt decem mundi?* becauſe I know that it was wittily anſwered, *Sed ubi ſunt reliqui novem?*

CHAP. IV.

Of Eternity.

THat Eternity is all preſent, and that, in it, there is neither preterit, nor future, is but a Conceit, and a needleſs Myſterie impoſed upon our belief, which is really more Myſterious than the Trinity; who knows but it is founded upon an expreſſion in *Cicero*, wherein Eternity is call'd *æternum inſtans*? For how then can it be ſaid, that God was before the World? for *was* is preterit, and before the World there was, as themſelves alledg, no time; and ſo there was a *was* in Eternity. Is not God call'd by Himſelf *Alpha* and *Omega*, firſt and laſt, the one whereof is preterit, and the other future? And it is ſaid, *Rev.* 16. 5. *O glorious God, who art, and waſt, and ſhalt be.* And if it be anſwered, That this is only

only fitted to our Capacities; certainly, that is all is cravel: for doubtleſs there is no ſuch reall thing, as theſe three meaſures of time, even in things finite and created; for they owe their Being only to our conceit, as well in the one as in the other. And when God deſcrib'd Himſelf by His name J A H, *I am*, it was not mean't, that no meaſure of time could be attributed to Him, but the preſent; but rather, that what He was, was to man incomprehenſible. And that all we could know of Him, was, that He exiſted; and by that expreſſion, that all things to Him are preſent, was meant, that by His Knowledge *intuitive*, (as Divines term it) He comprehends all things which were to be, as if they were really preſent; and this is ſpoke, not of his Being, but of his knowledge. Neither can it be concluded that if *was* or *ſhall be*, may be attributed to God, then He muſt be mutable, and that, *was* denotes mutation; for as I

said formerly, these are but Terms, not really existing, and so cannot import any real mutation.

CHAP. V.

Of Providence.

HOw God imploys His uncontrolable Scepter, after what fashion He governs this lower World, and in what Characters He writes His Eternal Decrees hath been the Arrogant study of some mad-cap Pedants, who talk as Magisterially of His Decrees, as if they were of His Cabinet Councel. And albeit to deter such bold intruders, He destroyed thousands of His ancient People, because they look'd into His Ark; Yet, such is the petulancy of some later Wits, that they must needs look into His unsearchable bosom, and there marshal all His Decrees, and conceit they understand His way of working;

working; and thus in disputing of objects, infinitely removed, by their abstruseness, from their sense, they shew themselves more ridiculous, than those who would dispute concerning the qualities of an object, before it come so near as that they may know of what *Species* it is; for seeing it is a Maxime, that there is nothing in our understanding, which hath not past to it throw our senses, and that the things of God are immaterial, and so fall not under the cognizance of our Senses; It must be folly to think, that any humane scrutinity can find out Mysteries that are so unsearchable, except they be imparted to them by immediate Revelation; a kind of correspondence which I conceive few now a days hold with Heaven. Yet, I confess, it is as hard to confute the Fictions, as it is impossible for them to come by the knowledge of them. But as this study is unattainable, so it is unprofitable; for seeing God's art of

governing the World, and His Decrees of ſaving or damning its Citizens; is a trade we ſhall never be able to Practiſe: why ſhould we have ſuch an itch to underſtand it? It ſhould be enough to us, to be ſaved, albeit we know not how, or by what manner of Decrees; except we be of the ſame metall with that fooliſh patient, who would not be cured, becauſe the Phyſitian would not ſhew him how the cure was to be compoſed, and what were its ingredients. And is it not the *Zenith* and top-branch of madneſs for us to pry into God's unſearchable Decres, who know not how our neighbours calf is formed in its Dams belly?

It was a narrow Omnipotency, which ſome Mean-ſpirited Heathens allowed their *Jupiter*, when they conceited that he wanted leaſure to diſpoſe of triflles.

Non licet exiguis rebus adeſſe Jovi.

For if the twinkling of an eye, were not time ſufficient for God to diſpoſe of

of all the affairs of this world, then there might be a greater power than His; and the Power to diſpoſe to ſuddainly, were wanting to his Omnipotency, and ſo He were not infinite, and conſequently no God.

Neither was the Rodomontade of *Alphonſus*, King of *Portugal*, more Pious than this. Wen he alleaged that if God had made uſe of His advice in framing the World, He had helped many things in it, which he now could juſtly tax of Error.

Theſe two extremes, are the two Poles, whereon the Globe of Atheiſm turns it ſelf; ſome out of an impious humility, Complementing God out of His Authority, by denying that He diſpoſes of the meaner ſize of buſineſs; and others detracting from his Providence, in attributing his Operations to *Chance* and *Fate*, or branding them with injuſtice or imprudence.

There are, among School-men, two Opinions which diſpute Victory with (almoſt)

(almost) equal forces. The one whereof, will have God the sole Agent, and to make use of secundary causes, only, as of ciphers: these say that it is not fire which burns, but that God burns *ad præsentiam ignis*; nor Water which cools, but that God cools *ad presentiam aquæ*: which is, in my Opinion, the same thing as to say, that God jugled with man; and as Charmers do, presented ingredients, but wrought by hid means.

In too near an Affinity with this, is the Doctrine of Predestination, as some teach it; wherein they will have man to play the mere Spectator, in his own Salvation: and albeit there be a free and full tender of Mercy made to lost man, yet will not allow him any Power to embrace or reject it; judging this one of the necessary Appanages of Gods Omnipotency, that he doth save or condemn *ex mero beneplacito*; never considering, that the question is not, what God

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can do, but what he doth: And that it derogates nothing from his Omnipotency, that he will not damn poor ſinners; who according to their Doctrine cannot be blamed for their obſtinacy; becauſe it was never free to them to do otherwiſe: and how (I pray you) could the ſluggard, in the parable, have been Puniſhed, for not improving his Talent, and laying it up in a Napkin, if God had, by His Decree, caſt an inſolvable knot upon that Napkin, wherein it was laid up?

The other opinion, will have ſecundary cauſes the ſole Agents; and teaches, that God, in the firſt moulding of each Creature, did dote it with innate qualities, ſufficient to act every thing requiſite for its ſubſiſtence; but in ſign of its ſubjection to its Maker, reſerved to Himſelf, as His Prerogative Royal, a Power to bend and bow theſe inclinations upon extraordinary occaſions, for the good of the Univerſe, or when his infalli-

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ble Omniprudence ſhould think expedient. Thus, when that All-ſeing eye of the World, the Sun, was firſt turned off the frame, it had in Commiſſion to ſow its influences over the World without any retardment; Yet was its motion Arreſted, and turned back by an extraordinary Warrant in the days of *Joſhua* and *Zedekiah*. Thus they make the Creatures reſemble a Watch, which after it is once compleated, goes by its own Springs and Wheels, without the Artiſts extraordinary aſſiſtance. Yet when either its motion becomes irregular, or when the owner finds it fit, it is unpieced, or hath its Index put forward or backward at his pleaſure. And this laſt, ſeems to ſuit beſt with the Principles, both of Chriſtianity and Stoiciſm. With Chriſtianity, becauſe it gives a check to preſumption, and ſuffers not man to think himſelf the ſole Arbiter of his own condition; becauſe God can eaſily quaſh theſe *Babylon*-like fancies, which his topleſs ambi-

tion

tion is ſtill a building; and to his deſpair; becauſe a lift from the ſtrong arm of Providence, may heave him up above all his difficulties.

This correſponds beſt likewiſe with Stoiciſme, becauſe it pulls the hands of a ſluggard from his boſome, and ſets them a work to prepare for himſelf, and not to repoſe his unreaſonable hopes upon divine Providence; which only keeps thoſe from ſinking, who endeaver to ſwim. This likewiſe takes from man, all excuſe of ſinning, nor ſuffering him to lay over his vitiouſnes upon Providence, a ſhift too ordinary omongſt ſuch as miſunderſtand the raſhleſs Doctrine of the reformed Churches.

This opinion makes us likewiſe underſtand, what the Heathens meant by *Fortune*, which they termed *giddy*; what the Stoicks meant by *Fate*, which they confeſſed to be *irreſiſtible*; and in what ſence Philoſophers concluded that each man could hammer out his own Fortune. As to the Pagans *For-*

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tune, it cannot be thought, that seing it was by themselves confess'd to be *blind*, that they could trust it with the reins of the admirably managed World. And seeing they confessed, that it was always staggering and unconstant, it cannot be thought that they could ascribe to it, all the curious and just events, which they themselves admired hourly. Wherefore it is probable, that the Philosophers, having through the prospect of Nature, and by an uninterrupted experience, observed, that man (who acted from a freedom of spirit unrestrained, either by Providence or starr-influences, as to his ordinary Operations) was of a volative and capricious humor; therefore they conclude that the state of human affairs, which was framed and unframed at his ill-fixt pleasure, behoved necessarily to be most subject to changes. And that seeing the Victories of *Cesar*, depended upon the inclinations of his Souldiers, who by abandoing him, would fetch

fetch his Prosperity away with them, they had reason therefore to term fortune Frail and exposed to hazard.

Thus the advancement of the restless Courtier is uncertain, because it hinges from the humor of his Prince, whose spirit hath some allay of unconstancy, as well as hath that of the fearful Subject, who trembles under his Scepter. And thus the oyl-consuming student, can promise himself no applause, because the Paralytic hand of the multitudes fancies, holds the Scales wherein his Abilities are weighed.

In fine, *Fortune* was nothing to those Ancients, but the unbodyed freedom of mans will, considered abstractly from all particular persons and the innate qualities of all other Creatures (which, because they are mortal, must therefore be changable) than which nothing is more inconstant, nothing more blind.

The other branch of divine Providence,

dence, which consists in the supreme Authority, whereby God makes all humane inclinations run sometimes against the byas of their specific Nature, was by them termed *Fate.* And this, in their Mythology, they fabled to be an *Adamant* chain, which they fastned to the foot of *Jupiters* Chair; meaning by its Adamantine nature, that it was hard to be broke, like the *Adamant*; and by fast'ning it to *Jupiters* Chair, that it was the product of the Almighty's Power. Thus *Fortune* and *Fate*, were to them but the right and left hand of Christian Providence.

These embodyed *Angels*, the *Stoicks*, finding that *Fortune's* megrim could not be cured, nor *Fate's* decrees rescinded, and yet resolving, in spight of all external accidents, to secure to themselves a calmness of spirit; did place their happiness in the contempt of all these follies, whose blossoms *Fortune* could not blast, and sought for happiness in an acquie-

scence

ſcience to all which Providence did unalterably decree; So that neither Fortune nor Fate could ſtand in the way of their happineſs, becauſe they ſlighted the one, and ſubmitted to the other.

And in this ſenſe, each man in their Schools, was admitted to be Maſter-of-work to his own fortune: and that without diſparaging the Omnipotent Power of the great Fortune-maker, in ſubmiſſion to whom their happineſs was placed:

Albeit the knowledge and acknowledgment of a God, be the *baſis* of true Stoicisme, and a firmer one than any the Heathens could pretend to: Yet that knowledge of Him, which by the curioſity of School-men and the bigotry of Sub-preachers, is now formed in a Body of Divinity, is of all others the leaſt neceſſary and the moſt dangerous. And whereas we did ſee God but in a Glaſs formerly, that Glaſs is now ſo miſted and ſoyl'd by each Pedants flegma-

tic breath, that it is hard to see him at all, but impossible to see Him there. And to extend a little that Mysterious Analogy; we are said to behold God here, as in a Glass; and as objects are best perceived in the smoothest Mirrors; so the plainest descriptions of Him, are still the truest: for when He is seen by Atheists in the Globe-glass of their infidelity, He appears less thn really He is; when beheld by the Pagans in the Multiplying Glass of Paganisme, He appears many; and when He look'd is upon in the Magnifying Glass of Superstition though He appear but one, Yet He is misrepresented, because He is represented as more terrible than he desires to appear; and ordinarily the better cut Glasses are, in the more Artificial, the worse the face, as by them represented.

CHAP

CHAP. VI.

Of Theory.

THat first course which did sow all the World with Briers and Thorns, did, of all other things, fall most heavily upon the Soul of man. Which because it was chief in the Transgression, ought in reason to have been most tortured in the Punishment. And now his disquieted Spirit, is daily pierc'd with the Prickles of Thorny disputes and debates; which, as like briers, they produce no fruit fit for alimenting that noble half of man, which is his Rational Soul; So do they, like Thorns, pierce tender his Conscience, and to screw his Torments to their highest pin; the thoughts of God, and of settlement in Him, which like balme should cure those sores, is become that Hemlock,

which occaſions his diſtractions, and poyſons his Meditations. For, albeit the Heroes of the Primitive Church, did give milk in abundance to Infant-Chriſtians; Yet, many of their ſucceſſors, have mixt it ſo with the tart Vinegar of contention, that the milk begins now to crudle, and ſo is become loathſome to the appetite of tender believers. For, moſt of Churchmen, being idle, and conceiving, that if they taught only the Holy Scriptures, their vocation might by Laics be undervalued as eaſie, and that they would be denyed that applauſe, which was due to quaintneſs of wit, eſpecially in a ſetled Church, wherein Church-men could not draw reverence from the people, by Oracles, as did the Heathen Prieſts; nor by prophecies and miracles, as did the Servants of the moſt High, under the old and new Teſtaments; did therefore, according to their private inclinations, frame each to himſelf a new kind of Divinity. The more

more Pragmatick ſort, and thoſe whoſe humor was edged with choler, invented polemic or controverted divinity: And ſo by an inteſtine and civil war of opinions, raiſed, within the bowels of Religion, did waſte and pillage that holy *Canaan*, which formerly flowed with the milk of ſincere Doctrine, and the honey of divine Conſolations. And then that precious blood, which formerly purpled only Pagan-ſcaffolds, dyed now the ſwords of fellow-believers; who, to propagate their private judgment, buried Churches under their rubbiſh, fed the birds of Heaven with the carcaſes of pious and reverend Churchmen: and by the mad hands of bigot opiniaſtry, broke to pieces all the ſacred bonds of natural and civil duties; and thus they raiſed the devil of contention, whom they could not lay again, and made this Itch of diſputing, turn the Scab of the Church.

Others again, in whoſe brains ſullen melancholy form'd phantomes

and ideas, invented Scholastic Theology; and these in abstract cells, erected a Mint-house, for coyning the dross of their own contemplations, into wonderful bombast notions; and to make them go current, in the suffering Church, gave them the *impressa* of Theology.

A third sort, not able to soare their pitch in the sky of Invention, resolved to set up a correspondence with Heaven: and this they called Enthusiastic, or inspired Theology. And their Cabbins were Post-houses, where one might know what was resolved lately in the conclave of heaven, whether the King or Parliament was to wear the Lawrels, and what should be the issue of our pious rebellions. These could likewise cast the horoscope of our salvation; and invented a species of Physiognomy, whereby they could tell if the marks of Grace dwelt upon a face; and if one had the tracts of an elect of God. After this fashion did they prophesie

their

their own fancies, and call that *Providence* only which made for them.

There wants not ſome likewiſe, who, out of a well meaning deſire, to make the lamp of truth dart its rayes with the clearer ſplendor, ſnuff it ſo nearly, that they extinguiſh it quite: and leave us nothing but the ſtink of its ſnuff; like ſome curious Phyſicians, who purge ſo frequently, that they deſtroy the body entruſted to their cure. We, in this Iſland, have met with ſome of theſe *Charletans*, who, I am confident, purged oftner both Church and State, than *Luke*, the beloved Phyſician, would have preſcribed, if we had had the good fortune to have been his patients.

The talleſt wit is not able to reach heaven, albeit (I know) many disjoint their wits in ſtretching them too high in the inquiry of its myſteries. Neither impute I our ſhort-coming in the knowledge of theſe myſteries, ſolely to their obſtru-

ſeneſs, but I believe our meditations are more clouded in relation to theſe, then really they need to be, becauſe of their innate frailty: for we ſee, that ſome who are maſters of much reaſon in things humane, betray much folly in their devotions; wherefore, I am induced to believe, that it fares with the ſoul in this, as uſually it doth with the body, whoſe pulls are proportionally the weaker, as the thing graſp'd after is plac'd above its true reach. And ſo theſe arrogant Pretenders pull but faintly, becauſe they raiſe their meditations too high on their tip-toes: whereby they are diſabled from imploying all their natural vigor, in pulling at theſe weighty and ſublime Truths, which they catch, not by that corner which is neareſt, as meaner wits do, (and ſo are more ſucceſsful) but endeavour a fetch at what, in Divinity, is higheſt; by which effort, their endeavors are fainter, than thoſe whoſe ſpirit is of a leſſer ſize. And theſe

Coloſſus

Coloſſus wits, become the greateſt Heretics, as thoſe ordinarily are moſt burnt, whoſe fingers oftеſt ſtir up fires; and as Chirurgions have more cuts and wounds, than any other Mechanicks, who handle not ſo oft theſe wounding tools. It is not fit that mortal man ſhould wreſtle too much with theſe myſteries, leaſt his reaſon, like *Jacob*, be forc'd to come off, halting.

Nothing hath more buſied my thoughts than to find a reaſon why the Heathens, who were as aſſiduous and zealous too in the worſhip of their Gods, as we Chriſtians, did never frequent Sermons, nor knew no ſuch part of divine Service; whereof (probably) the reaſon was becauſe their Governors (whoſe commands amongſt them were the ſole *jure-divinoſhip* of all Eccleſiaſtic Rites) feared, that Church men, if they had been licenc'd to harangue to the people, would have influenc'd too much that groſs body; which was the reaſon like-

likewiſe, why, in the primitive Church (as one of their Hiſtorians obſerves) *ex formula populo prædicabant, tantum antiquitas timebat δημαγωγὸς.* They preached only approved Sermons: ſo much did antiquity fear theſe leaders of the people; a practice, as is reported, lately renewed by the Duke of *Ruſſia*: and this ſeemeth alſo to have been the reaſon, why all Liturgies have prick'd texts for their Preachers, leſt if they had been left a freedom in their choice, they had choſe ſuch as might, in the letter, have ſuited beſt with ſuch ſeditious Libels as are now obtruded upon the people, in lieu of pious Homilies, at remarkable or feſtival occaſions. Yet, I think, that our late Doctors, who can find all Doctrine in any text, would eaſily have eluded that canonic deſign. If we ſhould parallel the Homilies, which thoſe renowned Fathers have left, as Legacies to poſterity, with theſe which our age runs after, we would find, that the

firſt

first were pointed lessons of mortification; which, like *Moses*'s rod, could draw gushes of tears from the rocky hearts of the most obdured sinners: whereas many of these last are but State-gazets, wherein the people are informed, what are the resolves of the civil Magistrate: And whereas their first institution made them Ambassadors of glad-tydings betwixt God and His people, they have made themselves Heralds to denounce warrs betwixt God's Vice-gerent and His subjects. Thus, *Peter*'s successors will oft times, like himself, rather draw the sword than watch for their Master. And since our Saviour hath disarmed them, as He did *Peter*, and filled their hands with the keyes, those who offend them, are sure to get over the head with these. I confess, God hath not left His Church without some skilful Pilots, to lead in His servants, with security, to the harbor of Salvation: to whom this Discourse and its Author shall pay all respects.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Strictneſs of Churches.

MOſt of all Churches, do, like coy maids, lace their bodies ſo ſtrait, that they bring on them a a conſumption; and will have the gates of heaven to have been only made for themſelves: and as this nigardlineſs hath poſſeſt Churches, from that root hath ſtem'd the churliſhneſs of ſome private Chriſtians, who will allow God but a moſt inconſiderable number of thoſe whom He hath admitted to make up His viſible Church. Thus, ſome Paſtors will only admit two or three to be gueſts at the Lord's Table, allowing no wedding garment, but what is of their own ſpinning: and others, with their unchaſtiable hands, blur the names of all their acquaintances out of the Book of Life, as if they were keepers of His Regiſters

and Rolls; and will only have ſeats kept in the Church triumphant, for three or four Sifters, who are ſo frugal of their devotions, as to ſpare them at home, to the end they may be liberal in public. But both theſe ſhould conſider, that the new *Jeruſalem* is ſaid to have more gates than one, that *John*, in his *Revelation*, tells us, that numberleſs numbers were ſeen following the Lamb; and that it is not probable, that the wiſe Framer of the world made ſuch a ſpacious dwelling, as heaven, to be inhabited by ſo inconſiderable a number: whereas hell (hell in the geography of believed tradition) is only the ſmall kernel of this ſmall ſhell *the earth*. I know, that many are caled and few choſen; and that the way is ſtrait, and few enter in at it: But we ſhould conſider, that theſe choſen, are ſaid to be few, in reſpect only of thoſe many who are called: which is moſt certain; for ten parts of eleven are Pagans or Mahumetans,

(and

(and all are called) of that eleventh part, many are malicious Heretics; and amongst the residue many are flagitious and public sinners; So that albeit the greatest part of the regular members of the visible Church were sav'd, yet the number would be small, in comparison of these others: The body of the visible Church, must (like all other bodies) be compounded of contrary elements. And albeit I am not of opinion, that this body should be suffer'd to swell with humors, yet I would not wish, that it should be macerated with purgations. It's nails (though but excrementitious parts) should not be so nearly pared, as that the body may bleed; yet, they should be so pared, as that Christians may not scratch one another. They should feed, not upon blood, but milk; and they are unmannerly guests, who will not suffer others to sit at their Masters table with them.

It pleases my humor to contemplate, how, that albeit all Religions war against one another; yet, are all

of

of them governed by the ſame principles; and even by thoſe principles, in effect, which they ſeem to abominate. Thus, albeit the ceſſation of miracles be cryed down by many, yet, do the moſt bigot relate, what miracles have been wrought by the founders of their Hierarchies, and what propheſies they have oracul-ſlouy pronounced. And ſeeing all confeſs, that God, in our days, breaks the proſperous upon the ſame Wheel, on whoſe top they did but lately triumpth; making *fortune* adopt the oppreſt in their vice; why ſhould we talk ſo much of the ceaſing of miracles? For, doubtleſs, theſe effects are, in policy, as contrary to nature as are the ſwimming of iron, or ſweetning of rivers; or rather more: ſeeing in the firſt, man's will is forc'd (without which, ſuch revolutions could not be effectuated) whereas in the laſt dull and ſenſual qualities are only wreſted; which as they are not ſo excellent, [ſo, doubtleſs, are not

able

able to make such resistance as the Soul of man: Yea, I should rather think, that the world being become old, must, doubtless, be more dim-sighted (as all old things are) than formerly; and therefore, God doth now present greater objects of admiration to our eyes than He did formerly: For man is become so atheistical, that if God did not press His meditation, with such infallible testimonies of the Being of an irresistable power, he would, doubtless, shake off all resolutions of submitting. Thus, we see that in all the tract of *Iohn*'s Revelations, miracles grow still more frequent, the nearer the world draweth to its grave; and, like all other bodies, the weaker it becomes, the more subject it is to all alterations, and the less is nature able to resist. And it would appear, that if miracles were requisite at first, for the establishment of Religion, even when no older Religion was to cede it, and to make an *exit* at its entry; much more,

should

ſhould miracles be neceſſary, for fixing any Religion againſt the received conſtitutions of a previouſly ſetled Church. But to proſecute my firſt deſign, it is remarkable, that albeit infallibility be not, by all, conceded to any militant Church; yet, it is aſſumed by all: Neither is there any Church under the Sun, which would not fix the name of heretic, and account him (almoſt) reprobate, who would refuſe to acknowledge the leaſt rational of their Principles: and thus theſe Church-men pull up the ladders from the reach of others, after they have by them ſcal'd the walls of preferment themſelves. That Church-men ſhould immerſe themſelves in things civill, is thought excentric to their ſphere, even *in ordine ad ſpiritualia*: And yet, even the *Capuchins*, who are the greateſt pretenders to abſtract Chriſtianity and Mortification, do, of all others, dipth moſt in things civil. The *Phanatics* enveigh againſt Presbyterian Gowns. The *Presbyter-*

ian tears the Episcopal lawn Sleeves, and thinks them the whore of *Babel's* shirt. The *Episcopist* flouts at the popish Robes, as the livery of the beast. The *Antinomian* emancipates his disciples from all obedience to the Law. The *Protestant* enjoyns good works, and such are commanded, but place no merit in them. The *Roman-Catholic* thinks he merits in his obedience. The *Phanatic* believes the Lord's Supper but a ceremony, though taken with very little outward respect. The *Presbyterian* allowes it, but will not kneel. The *Episcopist* kneels, but will not adore it. The *Catholic* mixeth adoration with his kneeling. And thus, most of all Religions are made up of the same elements, albeit their asymbolic qualities predomine in some more than in others. And if that maxime hold, that *majus & minus non variant speciem*, we may pronounce all of them to be one Religion.

The Church, like the River *Nilus*, can

can hadly condescend where it's head lies; and as all condescend that the Church is a multitude of Christians; so joyn all their opinions, and you shall find that they will have it to have, like the multitude, many heads. But in this (as in all Articles, not absolutely necessary for being saved) I make the Laws of my country to be my Creed: and that a clear decision herein is not absolutely necessary for Salvation, is clear from this, that many poor Clowns shall be saved, whose conscience is not able to teach their judgments how to decide this controversie, wherein so many heads have been confounded; so many have been lost, and so many have been shrewdly knockt against one another; from which flinty collisions, much fire, but little light, hath ever burst forth.

God, by His Omniscience, foreseeing, that it was too dazeling a sight for the pur-blind eyes of man's Soul, to behold Him, invironed with

the rayes of divine Majesty, did bestow upon us, three mirrors, wherein we might contemplate Him (as we use to look upon the Sun in a tub of water, not daring to eye His native splendor) the one was the mirror of the Law, the second is the works of the Creation, and the third is the Soul of man; which He Himself hath told us is framed after His own glorious Image.

As for the first mirror, the Law; God knowing that *instinct*, or, as we term it, *a natural conscience*, were compleat Digests of all that man was to observe, He did make that mirror very little, a volum of only two pages; but that mirror is, of late, so mullered about, by marginal Notes and Commentors, that the mirror it self is almost over-spread by them; and it is very observable, that in the holy Registers, the Law is still abridged, but we never see it enlarg'd: For, albeit the fundamental Laws of both Tables were packed up in narrow bounds, yet our Saviour sums them in these two, *fear the Lord thy God*

God with all thy heart, and *love thy neighbour as thy self*. And the Apoſtle *Paul*, in his Divine Epiſtles, profeſſes, that he deſires to know only Chriſt, and Him crucified: So, that I am confident, that if our Saviour were to preach in Perſon, once more to the world; He would enveigh againſt our Caſuiſts, as much as He did againſt the Jewiſh Talmudiſts; for, the one, as well as the other, are equally guilty of burdening the ſhoulders of weak Chriſtians, with the unneceſſary traſh of humane inventions. For, I remember to have ſeen a late Caſuiſt, diſpute contentiouſly amongſt his other caſes, whether Tabacco, taken in the morning, did break a commanded Faſt or not? To which, after a feveriſh conflict, his wiſdom, forſooth, returns this oraculous anſwer; *That if Tabacco be taken at the noſe, it breaks not the Faſt, but if it be taken at the mouth, then it breaks the Faſt.* Which, becauſe I made a Collaſterion betwixt the Ca-

fuists and the Talmudists, I shall only mention, out of the Talmud (which was the *Jews* comment upon the Law) a case, exactly parrallel to this: wherein is decided, that if a man carry a burden on the Sabbath-day, upon both Shoulders, then he is guilty of breach of Sabbath, but that he is not guilty if he carry it upon one shoulder. As to my own private judgment, (which I submit to my Spiritual Tutors) I think, that seeing the Conscience of man, is the same faculty with the Judgment, when conversant about Spiritual Imployments, as the word συνειδησις, which imports a knowledge reflexive upon a man's own self, doth abundantly evidence) that therefore, as there are Judgments of different tempers; so there are, likewise, Consciences of different frames: and which vary as much amongst themselves, as natural constitutions do. And therefore, as the same Dose would prove noxious to one constitution; wherein another would find his health: so in one

one and the ſame act, that reſolution may be ſaving to one Conſcience, which may condemn another; for, ſeeing God hath kindled a Torch in each man's breaſt, by whoſe flame he may ſee what path he ſhould beat: in which ſenſe it is ſaid, *Pro.* 20. 27. *That the underſtanding of man is the Candle of the Lord*; and can that light miſlead? And ſeeing man muſt be anſwerable according to what it preſcribes to him; doubtleſs it is fitter that he ſhould hearken to the reiterated dictates of his Conſcience, than to the reſolution of any School-caſuiſt: and that for the ſame reaſon, that it is more rational to obey the Law it ſelf, than the wiſeſt Lawyer, who may either be deceived himſelf, or have a deſign to deceive others. For if God hath endued man with every thing neceſſary for working out the work of his own Salvation, with fear and trembling, He hath doubtleſs beſtowed upon him an internal Touch-ſtone, by whoſe Teſt he may diſcern betwixt good and evil; ſeeing to

command man to walk uprightly, and not to beſtow on him eyes to ſee the road, were to command a blind man to walk, and to puniſh him if he went aſtray. And as the compoſure of man's body, would be imperfect and manck, if he wanted a palate to diſcern betwixt the taſte of what is wholeſom, or what is putrid; So if the Soul of man were not able to know its own duty, and, by the palate of a natural Conſcience, to difference betwixt lawful and unlawful: certainly the ſoul might be thought to be but ill appointed. Thus, beaſts are, by an intrinſic principle, taught their duty, and do accordingly ſhun or follow what is convenient for them, without conſulting any thing from without. And ſhall man be leſs perſpicacious, or more defective than theſe? As alſo ſeeing man is oftimes, by thouſands of occaſions, removed far from the aſſiſtance of Chair or Pulpit-informers; and in that his retiredneſs, hath

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moſt of theſe caſes to be reſolved: it were abſurd to think that he then wants ſufficiency of help for their reſolution. And it is moſt obſervable, in Scripture, that men are oft check'd for quenching the Spirit, but never for not conſulting Caſuiſts. I know it may be thought, that when the Soul of man rages at ſometime in a Fever of Luſt, Revenge, or ſome ſuch ſin, that then the Conſcience may rave; Yet I dare ſay, that albeit the Soul, out of an inordinate deſire to enjoy its own pleaſures, may ſet its invention a work, to palliate the ſinfulneſs of what it deſires; yet by ſome ſecret knell, the Conſcience founds ſtill its reproof. And I dare ſay, that never man erred without a check from his Conſcience; nor that few have ſinned after an approbation obtained from his Conſcience of what he was about: and when we aſſent to theſe Doctors, is it not becauſe our Conſciences, or our Judgments (which are the ſame) aſſent, to

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what they inform? which evidences, that our Consciences are more to be believed, than they, by that rule, *Propter quod unumquodq; est tale*, &c. but to convince us of the folly of our addresses to these Doctors, it may, and often doth fall out, that that may be a sin in me, which a Casuist pronounces to be none: as if my breast did suggest to me, that it were a sin to buy Church-lands; if there-after I did buy them, it were doubtless a sin, albeit my Doctors, following the Canons of their particular Church assured me, that the sale of Church-lands were no sin in it self. I am confident then, that this Casuist-divinity, hath taken its rise from the desire Church-men had to know the mystery of each man's breast, and to the end, nothing of import, might be undertaken without consulting their Cell; persuading men, that *in ordine ad spiritualia*, their Consciences, and consequently their Salvation, may be interested in every civil affair. And

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to confirm this, it is most used by *Jesuits* and Innovators, who desire to know all intrigues and subvert all States; whereas the Primitive Church knew no such such Divinity, neither have its Doctors left any such Volumns.

It may be urged, that seeing the Conscience is but a reflex act of the Judgment, that as the Judgment is an unsure guide, the Conscience cannot pretend to be infallible; and that the one, as well as the other, is tutor'd by the fallacious principles of *sense* and *custom*: And I my self have seen my Land-lady, in *France*, as much troubled in Conscience for giving us flesh to eat in Lent, as if she had cast out the flesh of a Christian to be devoured by Dogs; and so Atheism may attribute to custom, these inclinations whereby we are acted on to believe a Deity; and may tell us, that the Mahumetans find themselves as much prickt in Conscience, for transgressing their Prophets Canons, as we for offending against the moral Law. And thus

thus the adoring of a Deity might have at first been brooded in the Council-chamber of a Statesmans head, and yet might have been, at that time, by the vulgar, and thereafter by the wisest pates, worshipped with profound respects: Yet, if we pry narrowly into this conceit, we shall find in it something of instinct, previous to all forgeries possible. For, what was it (I pray you) which encouraged, or suggested to these Politicians, that such a thing as the Deity might be dissembled to their people for their imposing that cheat, pre-supposed some pre-existing notion of it? Or, how entred that fancy first in their wild heads? Or, how could so many contemporary, yet far distant, Legislators, fall upon the same thoughts, especially, it being so remote from *sense*; and for framing of which *Idea*, their experience could never furnish a patern? Conscience then must be something else than the fumes of Melancholy, or,

Capricio's

Capricio's of Fancy; for elſe, roaring Gallants, who are little troubled, or can eaſily conquer all other fancies, would not be ſo haunted by theſe pricking pangs; which if they were not infallibly divine, behooved to be meerly ridiculous, and to want all ſupport from reaſon or experience.

There is another ſyle of caſes of Conſcience, which is a Cadet of that ſame family; and theſe are ſuch caſes as were the brood of theſe late times, which, like Inſects and unclean creatures, may be ſaid *generari ex putri materia*: an inſtance whereof, was the famous Siſter, who ask'd if ſhe was olig'd to execute her Cat for killing a Mouſe upon the Sabbath. This was a Theology, taught by old doting Wives, and ſtudied by State-expectants, who, to gain applauſe, and in hope to mount Preferment's Saddle, made uſe of this gilded Stirrop. I ſhall not inveigh againſt this foppery, ſeeing it hath not poſ-

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ſeſt mens conceit ſo long, as to have preſcribed the tittle of Divinity; but, like a Meteor, which, becauſe it is fixt to no Orb, and is but a maſs of inflamed vapors, doth therefore diſappear immediately, how ſoon its ſubſtance flaſhes out; and its aſhes are now entom'd in the ſame clay with its brother twain, that pious *Non ſenſe*, wherein God Almighty was treated with in familiar and not in ſuperior.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Scriptures.

AS God did light the Candle of a private Conſcience, in each private breaſt; So hath He hung up the lamp of the Scriptures, in the body of His Church; and theſe we may call the Conſcience of the Church, whilſt Militant. Which ſome, by the breath of their vanity, and ſtorms of their paſſion, endeavour to blow out; whileſt others, make no other uſe of its Light, than to ſhew them where to find a jeſt. And within the arms of this diviſion, lie folded, all the prophane race of mankind. As to theſe firſt (who ſhould be firſt, becauſe they are Satan's firſt-born, and ſo deſerve a double portion of this reproof) they contend, that the Scriptures are written

written in a mean and low ſtile; are in ſome places too myſterious, in others too obſcure; contain many things incredible, many repetitions, and many contradictions. But theſe miſcreants ſhould conſider; that much of the Scripture's native ſplendor is impaired by its Tranſlators, who fearing to fall within the verge of the curſed, pronounced againſt ſuch as ſhould pair from, or add to, any thing contained in that divine Book, were, and are willing, that their Tranſlation ſhould want rather the luſtre, then meaning of the Original. As alſo of all Tongues, I believe the Hebrew admits leaſt of a Tranſlation; eſpecially into Northern Languages: for as thoſe Nations differ leaſt in their expreſſions, who, becauſe of their commerce or contiguity, have the moſt frequent converſe: So doubtleſs the *Jews* and we, by this Rule, ſhould, in language, hold the leaſt correſpondence. And becauſe there is no pure Fountain of this Tongue left, beſides

beſides the Bible, it muſt be hard to underſtand its expreſſions, wherein the Tranſlators can find little or no help from the variety and collation of Authors. And ſeeing this Book was penn'd indifferently, for all Ages, Nations, and Sexes, it was fit that its ſtile ſhould have been condeſcending: for thoſe who are tall, can pull the fruit which hangs low, whereas thoſe who are low, cannot pull what pearches high. And it is very obſervable, that where the fruit is greateſt and ripeſt, there the branch whereon it hangs, bows loweſt. When God appeared to *Elijah*, 1 *Kin.* 19. there came firſt a terrible wind, thereafter a great earthquake, and then fire; and yet God was in none of theſe, but ſpoke in the ſhrill, ſmall voice. His divine Providence hath ſo order'd it, that our conviction cannot be aſcrib'd to the ſard of Eloquence nor ſlight of Logick, but meerly to the truth of what is therein repreſented: our Saviour, will, with clay and

spittle, illuminate our eyes, as He did those of the other blind man in the Gospel. And such is the strength of His divine Arm, that He can vanquish Sathan, misbelief and ignorance with any weapon. And as we think the Sun's circumference but little, because it is situated so far above us: So we conclude these truths and excellencies but mean, because they are plac'd above our frail reach, and will blame the Scriptures, when the fault lurks in our selves; that great Physician will cure us, like an artist, with simples specific for our distaste, and not like a *Charletan*, with perfumed and gilded nothings. It is not alway the best metall, which carries the pleasingest *impressa*, nor doth the the painted candle cast the clearest light. There are many things in Scripture, which, because of our frailty, appear (like a staff in the waters) to be crooked, albeit they be straight. Why *Abraham* should have kill'd his son *Isaac*; or the *Israelites* have

have borrowed and not restored the *Egyptian* Ear-rings, staggers not my belief; for these belong'd to God, and neither to *Abraham*, nor the *Egyptians*: and so God might have given order to any He pleased to receive them: and those who obeyd, were no more guilty than such are, who, by order from the Master, receive what he did formerly lend to others. And as to its repetitions, they differ, no doubt, from one another; albeit we (who think all things removed, though by a little distance from us, of one shape) judge ill, in judging otherwise. And as an excellent person hath well observed, God hath appointed these reiterated expressions, to be as so many witnesses, to convince Heretics and others, who should call the meaning of any one place in question, or wrest it by what precedes or follows it.

As to those others, in whom the Wine of Gods consolations, (by be-

ing winded in the crack'd veſſels of their heads) turns into the tart vinegar of prophane Satyres, I condole their condition: for, that ſtomach muſt be very corrupt, wherein the beſt of aliment putrifies moſt; and probably, that indigeſted milk, being converted into excrementitious bile and humors, may caſt them in a fever which ſhall never cool to all eternity. I pitty likewiſe thoſe, who, out of an inadvertent (and as they think, ſinleſs) humor, jeſt with theſe divine truths; like fooliſh children, who love rather to ſport with their meat than eat it. Theſe, albeit they intend not to prophane Scripture, yet, they vilifie it: And we may ſay of the Bible, as of taking of God's name in our mouths, which muſt not only, not be done upon deſign, to blaſpheme and diffame Him; but muſt not be taken but upon neceſſity, and, like the Shew-bread, muſt be uſed only when we are in ſtraits. I have been too guilty of this laſt ſin

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my ſelf; and therefore, leſt I ſhould make no atonement, I have rather reſolved to appear before the world, in the duſt and ſackcloth of this ſilly Diſcourſe, a Pennance, really, to me, very great.

When I conſider how various and innumerable are the actions of men, and that in all theſe, they need particular inſtructions from above the Poles, I admire why there are ſo many paſſages in Scripture, from which our neceſſity may expect no aſſiſtance. And therefore leſt I ſhould think, that in Scripture there is any waſte of words, I am induced to believe, that there run many hid Allegories from *Geneſis* to *John's Revelations*; wherein the myſtical ſenſe deſerves likewiſe the name of God's word: Might we not have admired why the Story of *Hagar* and her baſtard is there voluminouſly deſcribed, and what the Church or private Devotion was concerned therein, if *Paul*, *Gal.* 4. 24. had not diſcovered

the mystery to us? By which things, another thing is meant: For, these two mothers are the two Testaments, the one which is *Agar*, of mount *Sinai*, which gendereth unto bondage, &c. I might here relate many excellent Allusions to prove this, but I shall satisfie my self with one which I did read in one Doctor *Everot*; who preaching upon *Joshua*, 15. 16. *Then* Caleb *said, he who smiteth* Kirjath-sepher *and taketh it, even to him will I give* Achsah *my daughter to wife, And* Othniel *took it*, &c. saith, that *Caleb* signifies a *good heart*, *Kirjath-sepher* the *City of the Letter*, *Achsah* the *Vision*, *Othniel God's opportunity*. And so the mystical sense runs; a good heart saith, that whoever will take in (and smite, as *Moses* did, the rock) the Letter of the word, shall have the vision which lurks under it discovered and given to him. And God's own time is the only mean for accomplishing this: As also, it is most remarkable, that City which was called

Kirjath-

Kirjath-ſepher before it was taken in, or, *the city of the Letter*, was, after it was conquered, called *Debir*, which ſignifies *an Oracle*; ſo that the Word, or Letter is no Oracle, till it be once, as it were, taken in and overcome. Since the reading of which Sermon, I believe that one may profit more by an Hebrew Lexicon, than by a thouſand Engliſh Lectures.

Thoſe who detract from Scripture, by attributing the production of Miracles, to natural cauſes, do not much diſparage the power of God, but (though againſt their depraved intention) cry rather up his omnipotency: For certainly, if theſe miracles were produced by ſecondary cauſes, then doubtleſs, that productive faculty was beſtowed upon them by the Almighty; and if he can make the creatures produce ſuch ſtrange effects, much more is he able to effectuate them, himſelf; as it is more difficult, for a great Maſter, to form curious and admirable Charact-

ers when he leads a ſcholars hand, than when he writes them with his own; for, ſuch help may be called *reſiſting aſſiſtance.* I cannot likewiſe but blame many of our Preachers, who rather break than open holy Texts; and rather make new meanings, ſuiting with their private deſigns, than tell the meaning of the Spirit. Who would not have laugh'd to hear a Presbyterian obſerve, from the firſt chapter of *Geneſis*, firſt verſe, that whilſt *Moſes* relates what God made, he ſpeaks nothing of *Biſhops*; by which it was evident (ſaid *Don Quixot*'s Chaplain) that *Biſhops* were not of divine Inſtitution: a conceit as ridiculous as that of a Prieſt, who hearing *Maria* ſpoken of for to ſignifie *Seas*, did brag that he had found *the Virgin Mary* named in the old Teſtament. Albeit I think preaching no part of divine Worſhip, hearing being no adoration; yet, love I to go to Church, were it but to ſee a multitude met together, to confeſs

feſs that there is a God: But, when I go to hear I care not whom, knowing that Chriſt elected Fiſher-men to preach down infidelity, when it was in the ruff of it's pride: and that *Paul* (the moſt ſignal Trophee of our Chriſtian Faith) was ſent for confirmation, not to *Peter*, or *James* at *Jeruſalem*, but *Ananias*, one of the meaneſt amongſt the Diſciples. And ſeeing our Salvation, by preaching, is a miracle; it is ſtill ſo much the greater, by how much weaker the inſtruments are. When the Pulpit was a mount *Sinai*, from which the Law was thundered, or a mount of *Oliver*, whereon our Saviours glorious transformation was to be ſeen, then were Sermons to be honoured; but ſince it is become a mount *Calvar*, whereon our bleſſed Saviour ſuffers daily, by ſcandalous railings, Sermons are become unſavoury, for the moſt part. I hate to ſee that divine place made either a Bar, whereat ſecular quarrels are, with paſſion, pleaded

pleaded; or a Stage, whereon revenge is by Satyres, satisfied; or a School-chair, from which unintelligible questions are mysteriously debated; but amongst all these innovations, introduced be our infant Divines, I hate none more than that of giving reasons for proving the *Doctrine*, which being Scripture it self, can be proved by nothing that is more certain. As for instance, when the Doctrine is, *that God loved us freely*, how can this be proved more convincingly than thus, *my Text sayes it?* and that is *idem per idem*, a most unlogical kind of probation. When I then go to Church, I should love to spend my time in praises and prayers; which as they are the only parts of adoration, so are they the natural imployments of the Church, either Militant or Triumphant: Yet, it displeases me to hear our young Pulpitires scritch and cry, like *Baal*'s Priests, as if God were no nearer them than the visible Heavens.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Moral Law.

I honours much our imployment, that God Almighty was the first and great Law-giver; and that our blessed Saviour stiles himself our Advocat. And it is an amazing wonder that we are tyed only by ten Laws; whereof seven were enacted doubtless for our advantage and respect; more immediately the security of the creature than the honor of the Creator; and are such restraints as men behoved to have laid upon one another, and which nature lays upon us all. And albeit I laugh at the Jewish Cabala, which says, that the moral Law was written, two thousand years before *Moses*, in black letters at the back of a clear burning fire: Yet, can I not approve *Tertullian's* wit, who endeavours to find all these ten in the

the prohibition made to *Adam*. There are indeed ſome ſins which ſcarce a conſequence can bring within the verge of theſe Commandments. As for inſtance, Drunkenneſs: Yet, theſe are ſuch as are ſo deſtructive to our nature; that there needs no Law be made againſt them. So that the Prieſt hit witily, to whom that ſin being confeſſed, enjoyned, as a Pennance, their being drunk a ſecond time: which makes me conclude, that if Drunkenneſs were to be ranged under any of theſe Laws, it would fall moſt naturally under that, *Thou ſhalt not kill.* Albeit the fourth Commandment ſeems to reſpect only the honour of God, and that the creature ſeems to be no ways bettered by it: Yet, our more ſerions obſervation will diſcover, that all belabouring creatures, as it were, expect an eaſe the ſeventh day more than any other. Whether it be, that nature is by cuſtom framed to that expectation, I cannot tell: But, we ſee that God choic'd

choic'd that number to be the year of Jubile amongſt his own people, and that it is the period of all the ſeveral conſiſtencies in our life, infancy, puberty, *&c.* And for this reaſon Phyſicians obſerve, that the child born in the ſeventh month is ſtronger than that which is born in the eighth; becauſe in the ſeventh it is come to a knot, by paſſing whereof, in the eighth it is in a ſtate of imperfection: But, what the myſtery of this holy Climacteric is, I refer till we come to that Sabbath of Reſt, whereat we ordinarily arrive after ſeven times nine years hath ſnowed upon us.

We may think, that if God had intended, that one and the ſame day of the week ſhould have been appropriated to have been a Sabbath, He had deſigned each day by a ſpecial term, and had commanded, that a day of ſuch a deſignation, ſhould have been ſequeſtrated for a Sabbath; and that by deſigning only the ſeventh day He did leave a liberty to employ any

any day of the seventh for that use. Yet, it is remarkable, that *Moses* nor the Jewish Church durst not attempt the change of their new-years day; but that the Almighty was pleased to bestow a peculiar sanction upon that alteration: For, *Exod.* 12. 2. He commands, that the month wherein the Israelites came from *Egypt*, should be, by them, reputed the first month of their year. Wherefore, seeing each Nation chalks out a divers Sabbath, it would appear that there is something of humor in it, as well as of Religion. The *Venereous* Mahumetan chooseth Friday, or, *dies Veneris*; The *dull Jew* dull *Saturns day*; The *warlick* Pharthians Tuesday, or, *Mars's day*: The *cheery* Europeans *Sunday*. And albeit the Christians are influenced only by inspiration; yet, I am confident, that the heathens did follow that for Religion, which suited best with their natural temper. But this is a meditation which should travel no where beyond a mans pri-

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vate breast, lest it meet with enmity and beget scandal.

It would puzzle a heathen much to hear, that he who breaks one of these Laws is guilty of the breach of all: But, it troubles not me, seeing all these Laws are made to shew our obedience, and the breach of any one of them shews our contempt of him who is the author of all. And it may be this was typified in *Moses* breaking both Tables, with one passionate fling, after he came down from the Mount: For, if this breaking of them had not been predesigned for some hid end, doubtless he had been reproved for his negligence. However, we may from this learn the desperate nature of passion, which made *Moses*, who was the meekest man upon earth, break all the Laws of God in one act. It might be also argued, that seeing all the Laws of the second Table were enacted for, and respect ultimately, the advantage of Man, that where man

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is not wronged, there the Law cannot be broke. And thus, if a married Man should have liberty from his wife to take another woman, this could be no more reputed adultery, than it could be reputed theft to take what belongs to our neighbour, himself consenting; and that for this cause, *Jacob's* begetting children with his wifes maids, is not in Scripture reproved as adultery, because they were given to him by her self, for that effect; but seeing the practice of all the world condemns this conclusion, far be it from me to express it farther; yet this is but a sophism, for seeing our bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, we can no more bestow them upon such uses, than a Church-Warden can give the use of the Church to Taverners.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the Judicial Law.

ALbeit the Judicial Law (which may be justly called the judicious Law) is commonly reputed to be but the municipal Law of the *Jews*; yet seeing it was delivered, in almost one context, with that Law which was thundred from mount *Sinai* with so much pomp, and is ingrost in the Books of holy Truth, and seems nearlier related to reason than any other Law; I admire why it should not be religiously observed by all Nations: especially seeing, as it is, the exactest picture of Justice that ever was drawn; so it hath this of a picture in it, that it seems to look directly upon all who behold it; albeit they be placed (amongst themselves) in directly opposite situtations and stances. Thus this Law suits even with

contrary tempers, and the unequal complexions of all Nations. I know that the Ceremonial Law is likewiſe inſerted amongſt the other holy Canons, and yet binds not us who live under the juriſdiction of the Goſpel: But, the reaſon of this ſeems to be, becauſe theſe did immediately concern the *Jewiſh* Church, and were converſant about theſe holy things. And ſo, ſeeing the Old Teſtament is a deſcription of their Hierarchy, and of God's way of working in thoſe times, I wonder not to ſee the Ceremonies amidſt other ſacred Truths, and yet not obſerved, ſeeing they are expreſly abrogated. But, if the judicial Law, which reſpected not the Hierarchy of that Church, was obligatory only whileſt the *Jewiſh* State was in Being, I admire why the Spirit of God took ſo much pains, firſt to pen it, and then to deliver it ſo Canon-like to poſterity. And ſince it is a principle in Law and Reaſon, that Laws muſt ſtill ſtand in vigor till they be expreſly abrogated,

abrogate, and must not be derogated from by consequences or presumptions, I admire why this Law, which God hath enervated by no express Text, should be now look'd upon as Statutes no-wise *A-la-mode*. It is true, that our Saviour, when the woman, convicted of adultery, was brought to Him, did not, according to that Law, pronounce the sentence of death against her; whence some think, that Church-men, following their Masters example, should not give their suffrages in criminal cases, and have only Ἀναιμακτον, a bloodless Jurisdiction; for, they are appointed to be Nurses, not Chyrurgeons. But, it is as true, that our Saviour profess'd, in all the tract of His life, that He came not to be a Judge in things temporal, and His design, in that place, was only to convince them of their own sins, and not to absolve her, nor to abrogate the Law: and therefore He desired him, who was freest from sin, to cast the first stone at her. And

whereas it is conjectured, that those words which our Saviour stoop'd down to write in the clay, immediately thereafter was an abrogation of that Law; this is Geomancy more wilde then any lesson which is alledged to have been read in the Mysterious face of Heaven, and should never be taught but in a Rabbie's Cabalastic Gown. And whereas it is alledged that there are ny precepts in that *corpus Juris*, which respects only the humor of the *Jews*, I admire why that can be urged; for certainly, theft, murder, and those other crimes punished there, are the same crimes which reign amongst us; and so why not punishable after that same manner? Neither are the humors of these *Jews* more different from ours, than was the *genius* of the *Romans*; and yet, few or no Nations refuse to cast their modern Laws in that antique mold. And it is very probable, that as God did, in the moral Law, teach man how to be just in his own actions; so He would likewise instruct him

him by a judicial Law, how to administrate Justice to others.

What can perpetuate a Law more than that the Authority whereby it is enacted should be obligatory in all ages; and the reason whereon it is founded should be eternal? and in what Laws do these two qualities appear more, or so much, as in the judicial Laws of the *Jews*, where the eternal Law-giver was Legislator, and the occasion, productive of them, seemed rational (and necessary) to His infallible omniscience? and if in any of these statutes, our purblind Judgments cannot see a present convenience, we should rather impute that to our own simplicity, than charge it as a guilt upon His divine Statutes. And are there not many municipal Laws in each Country, which have no hedge about them to keep them untrampled upon by wanton and too curious wits? But, that excellent Maxime, *Omnium quæ fecerunt Majores nostri, non est reddenda ratio, ne-*

quæ certa sunt, incerta redderentur; a reason must not be rendred for all that our Ancestors have enacted, lest what is now certain, become then uncertain. Albeit a Law enacted only by humane Authority, seem unreasonable or inconvenient; yet, it retains its vigor till it be abrogated by the same, or an higher Authority, than that whereby it was first statuted; and the Law sayes, that *nihil est tam naturale quam unumquodque eodem modo dissolvi quo colligatum est.* And, seeing the moral and judicial Laws are twisted so together, and are oft incorporated in one statute, as *Lev.* 20. 10. *Deut.* 22. 22. where adultery is forbidden, and the adulterer is to die the death: how can we think the one half of this Law obligatory for ever, and yet neglect it's other half, wherein the punishment is specified, and which appears to have been the scope of the divine Law-giver? For, the world needed not so much to have been aquainted, that adultery was a sin, as that that sin deserved death; and

and if we allow our capricious humor the liberty to reject what we think inconvenient we may, at last, arrive at that pitch of licentiousness, as to abrogate, by our practice, whatever chocks our present humor.

There are many things much mistaken in that Law, which makes the dissonancy betwixt it and our Law, appear so much the greater. As for instance, it is concluded, that by that Law, no theft was punishable by death; whereof this is given as a reason, because there is no proportion betwixt the goods and life; and that all that a man hath he will give for his life: whereas this argument would prove, that no guilt but murder should be punished with death; and so this dart rather flees over than hits the mark at which it is level'd. And if this argument concluded, why should adultery have been punished with death by that Law, seeing there seems no proportion betwixt that guilt and death? for if *vita & fama*

be in Law *æquiparat*, by that ſame Law, *pecunia eſt alter ſanguis*. But if there be no proportion betwixt goods and life, and if the puniſhment of theft, when it's aggrag'd to it's greateſt height, cannot, in their opinion, reach ſo far as to be capital: why was it, that by that Law nocturnal theives might have been killed by thoſe who found them? *Exod.* 22. 2. For, it appears againſt reaſon that more ſhould be permitted to a private and paſſionate party, than to a diſ-intereſted Judge. And it is clear by 2 *Sam.* 12. 5. theft was, in ſome caſes, capital. For, there *David* vows, that he who took his neighbours one ſheep, and ſpared his own many, ſhould ſurely die; which being ſpoke by a juſt King to an excellent Prophet, and not reproved, muſt not be thought a flaſh of paſſion, but a well-founded ſentence. Were not likewiſe two theeves crucified by the *Jews* at the ſame time with our ever glorious Saviour? which muſt not be

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thought a *Romish* execution, seeing the Law of the *Romans* allowed no such punishment for theft: I judge therefore, the reason why murder and adultery were punished with death, rather than all thefts, to have been, because theft may be repaired by restitution, but murder and adultery cannot. And albeit the judicial Law commands restitution only in the theft of an ox or sheep, (things of small moment, and which may be stollen to satisfie rather hunger than lust) yet, I see no limits set to Judges, commanding them not to inflict a capital punishment in extraordinary cases: For certainly, he who steals, may, for ought he himself knows, be about the committing of murder, seeing to steal what should aliment any poor one, is, in effect, the same thing as to murder him. It is much controverted if this Law prohibits self-murder, and I think it doth: For, we are commanded to love our neighbor as our self; and so, since we are command-

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ed not to kill our neighbour, that ſame Law muſt likewiſe forbid our killing of our ſelves. But the reaſon probably, why no expreſs Text did forbid that ſin, was, becauſe the Spirit of God knew that the natural averſion we have againſt death, would, in this, do more than ſupply a Law; and that thoſe who would be ſo deſperate as to neglect the one would never be ſo pious as to obey the other. Or elſe, God hath been unwilling, by making ſuch a Law, to intimate to the world, that ſuch a ſin might be committed. Yet, it ſeems ſtrange, that many are in Scripture related, as *Saul*, and others, to have killed themſelves, againſt whom no check ſtands regiſtred in holy Records. But, I ſtop here, intending to beſtow, a whole Tract upon the judicial Law, a task hitherto too much neglected.

The ſecond Mirror, wherein God Almighty is to be ſeen, is that of His Creatures: and in that a *Virtuoſo* may contemplate

contemplate in His infinite power, as in the other he may ſee His admirable juſtice. It is very obſervable, that when God, or His Prophets, would prove His greatneſs, the Sun, Orion, and the Leviathan, are made uſe of as arguments. And when the Spirit of God deſcribes the inimitable knowledg of *Solomon*, beſtowed upon him by God, as an extraordinary mark of His favor, he ſayes not, that he underſtood the quirks of Philoſophy, or notions of Divinity; but, it is ſaid, that he knew all, from the Cedar of *Lebanon* to the Hyſope that grows upon the wall. And, in earneſt, it is ſtrange, that when man comes into the gallery of this World, he ſhould take ſuch pleaſure in gazing upon theſe ill-drawn fictions, which have only paſt the pencil of humane wit, and ſhould not fix his admiration upon thoſe glorious creatures, which are the works of that great Maſter; in framing whereof God is content to be ſaid to have,

ſpent

ſpent ſix days, to the end, that man might admire the effects of ſo much pains; whereas His omnipotency might, with one *fiat*, have ſummon'd them all to appear, apparell'd in theſe gorgeous dreſſes which now adorns them. And it is as ſtrange, that man, having that huge volumn of the Creation to revolve, wherein is ſuch an infinite number of curious tale douces, to feaſt his eyes with curioſity, and to furniſh his ſolid knowledge; he ſhould notwithſtanding ſpend ſo much oyl and ſweat, in ſpinning out *entia rationis*, *materia prima*, *potentia obedientialis*, and ſuch like unintelligible traſh, which, like cob-webs, are but envenomed duſt curiouſly wrought. And becauſe the Groſs of mankind was ſo groſs, as not to underſtand God's greatneſs by the abſtract *idea's* which inſtinct preſented to him: Therefore, to reach that ſenſual croud, by the trunch-manrie of ſenſe He hath beſtowed upon them this mirror, wherein they may ſee how

infinite

infinite He is in power, who made *Nothing* ſo fruitful, as to bud forth in this glorious crop of creatures, which now inhabit the ſurface of Heaven and Earth.

CHAP. XI.

Of Monſters.

I Admire that ſuch Philoſophers as have had their faces waſh'd at the Font, can allow of Monſters, and define them to be the preter-intentional works of nature, wherein nature miſs'd of her deſign, and was not able to effectuate what ſhe intended: For, if *nature* and *providence* ſignifie the ſame thing in the Dictionary of Chriſtianity, it were blaſphemy to think, that *Providence* could not be able to effectuate what it once deſigned. All the creatures are, indeed, but as clay in the hand of this great Potter;

Potter; but, it were impious to think, that His Art can be mistaken in framing any Vessel: wherefore, I am apter to believe, that all these creatures which the Schools term *Monsters*, are rather the intentions than errors of *nature*; and that as *nature* doth nothing without design, so it doth nothing without success. And thus I rather admire nature in these, for her cunning variety, then upbraid her with insufficiency and weakness. Neither term I an Hermaphrodite, man or woman, according to the prevalency of that Sex which predomines in it; no more than I think that the Painter, when he hath delineated curiously anexact Mermaid, resolved to draw either a woman, or a fish, and not one distinct creature, piec'd up of both. And doubtless this error did at first proceed from man's vanity; who concluded, that every frame which answered not that *idea*, which resides in him, was the effect of *chance*, and not of *nature*; as if *nature* had been obliged to leave in the bi-

bliotheck

bliotheck of his head, the Original of all such Pieces as was to pass it's press.

Seeing God, in His survey of the Creation, called all that He had made *good*, because they were useful, I conclude, that those are the best which are the most useful. And albeit I condemn prodigality of ignorance; in preferring a Diamond to a Capon or Sheep; yet, do I not condemn such of vanity, as shine with these sparkling creatures: For, since God made *nothing*, which He did not destinate for some use, and seeing most of these serve for no use else, doubtless, the wearing of them is most allowable. Yet, can I not allow of those gaudy compounds, which men create to themselves; as if something had been still wanting after the Creation was finished; wherein Man could supply God, and Art Nature. The bestowing of an hundred pounds upon a Tulip, or a thousand on a Picture, are not to me the meer rants of luxury; but are courses pre-ordained by

by the Almighty, for returning to poor Artisans, that money, which oppression did at first most injustly screw from their weary hands. It is our ignorance of nature's mysteries which persuades us, that some, if not most, of the creatures, serve rather for beautifying the universe, than for supplying necessity; an error which experience daily confutes: So, those herbs which of old cloathed only the uninhabited mountains, do now deserve their own place in Apothecaries shops. And it is most observable, that the Scurvy grows no where but where the disease rages, which is cured by it. Seeing God loved variety in the Creation, He cannot hate curiosity in man; these two being correspondents; and the one without the other would be but as flowers to the blind, or as music to the deaf. I laugh at the fruitless pilgrimages of such as travel to *Jappa* or *China*, to satisfie their curiosity; there being a *Tredaskin's* closet in each Tulip, and a *Solomon's*

Iomon's Court in each Lilly of the field. And ſeeing mens tempers are ſo various, it was no wonder that the creatures (which were made for his uſe) ſhould have been made proportional to his humor: But, ſeeing Art hath, in many things, copied Nature to the life, I think not the Symmetry nor variety to be ſeen amongſt the creatures ſuch an infallible argument for proving the Being of God; as is *inſtinct*, which all the art of men and Angels cannot counterfeit; and herein is it, that that grand Magician muſt acknowledge the finger of his Maker, ſeeing here his own art fails.

Thoſe who expect equal excellency in all the parts of this curious Fabrick, do not underſtand wherein its Symmetrie conſiſts. All the ſtrings of an Inſtrument ſound not equally high, and yet they make up the harmony: the face of the earth looks in ſome places deform'd and patch'd; and yet it is there the mother of rich

mines (as if God intended to beſtow a great portion where He beſtows an ill face) and what we think deformities, were placed there as patches, and are no more blemiſhes, than the ſpots are to the Leopards.

I confeſs, that at firſt it puzled much my enquiry, for what end theſe Mountains were made ſo near neighbours to the divided clouds: and I once imagin'd, that theſe were rather the effects of the flood, than creatures at firſt intended; and were but the rubbiſh and mud which theſe impetuous waters had heap'd up in a maſs: But, I was thereafter diſſuaded from this conjecture, by the 8. Chap. *Prov.* where wiſdom, proving it's antiquity, ſays, that it was with God before the Heavens were prepared, and the Mountains ſetled; by the ſcope of which Text, it is clear, that the Heavens, Hills, and the reſt of the Creation, are ſaid to bear one date. It is then more probable, that God foreſeeing that the luſt

luſt of conqueſt would, like the Needle of the Compaſs, look oft North; as is evident by comparing all the Monarchies (firſt the *Aſſyrian*, then *Grecian*, then *Roman*, now *German*) did therefore bound ambition, as it were with high Hills, (albeit ſince Ambition hath found a way to climb over them) as if He told them, that they ſhould march no further. Thus, it is very obſervable, that the northern parts of one Kingdom, are alwayes more barren than the Southern limits of the Countrey which lies to the North of it. The North of *England* more mountainous and barren than the ſouth of *Scotland*, albeit it lye nearer the Sun, the South of *England* more pleaſant and fertile than the North of *France*; and the South of *France* than the North of *Italy*, &c.

We muſt likewiſe conſider, that nature bruiſed its face ſo when it fell in *Adam*, that it did then contract many of theſe blemiſhes which now

deform it; and that as it waxes old, its native beauty is the more deformed by furrowed wrinkles. We cannot judge what it was in health, by its present distempered condition, wherein it groans and travelleth in pain, as the Apostle tells us. And the differences betwixt these two states may be known from this, that God, when He compleated the Creation, saw that all was good; whereas *Solomon*, having reviewed it in his time, saw all to be vanity and vexation of spirit.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of Man, and his Creation.

THe third Mirror, wherein God is to be admired, is *Man.* This is that noble creature which God was pleaſed to mould laſt of all others, not willing to bring him home, till by the preceding Creations He had pleniſhed his houſe abundantly for him. And albeit in the creation of all other creatures, it is only ſaid, that God ſpoke and it was: Yet, when Man was to be framed, the cabinet Council of Heaven was called, and it is ſaid [*let us*] as if more Art had been to be ſhewed here, than in all the remanent Fabric of the terraqueous Globe, and glorious Circles of Heaven. It is likewiſe very obſervable, that albeit all the fiſhes of the Sea were formed by one word, all the beaſts of the field by

one act, *&c.* Yet, God was pleaſed to beſtow two upon the creation of *Man*; by the firſt, his body was created out of the duſt, and thereafter, was breathed in, his ſoul. And albeit tranſient mention is only made of all other Creations; yet the Hiſtory of Mans Creation is twice repeated, once, *Gen.* 1. 27. and again, 2. 7. And, leſt that foreſeen deformity, wherewith he was to be beſmeared after his fall, ſhould make it be queſtioned, that at his firſt creation he had receiv'd the *impreſſa* of God's Image, this is oft repeated: For, in the, 26. *v. Gen.* 1. it is ſaid, *Let us make man in our image*; and then again, *and after our likeneſs.* And in the 27. *verſe*, *So God created man in his own image*; and again immediately thereafter, *in the image of God created he him.* Yet, I am confident, that this image is ſo bedaled in the mire of ſin, and ſo ſhatt'red by its firſt fall, and this divine *impreſſa*, and

print,

print, ſo worn out, by our old vicious habits, that, if this genealogy had not been ſo oft inculcated, we could not but have called it in queſtion, albeit our vanity be ready enough to believe a deſcent ſo royal and ſublime. Wherefore I muſt again admire the folly of Atheiſts, who, by denying a Deity, cloud their own noble birth-right.

But, albeit man be made after Gods Image, yet, that can be no argument to conclude, that therefore God may be made after mans image, or repreſented under his figure, as the Anthropomorphites foolishly contend; no more, than if we ſhould conclude, that becauſe a Copy may be taken of an Original, therefore an Original may be taken of a Copy. Neither is this repreſentation ſalv'd from being idolatry, by alledging that the image is not worſhipped, but God, who is repreſented by it: For, it hath been well obſerved by an ancient Father, that idolatry in Scrip-

ture is called adultery. And it is no good excuſe for an adultereſs, that ſhe did lye with another becauſe he repreſented her Husband to her, and reſembled him as a Copy doth its Original: Yet, ſeeing nothing is roomed in our judgment and apprehenſion, but what firſt entered by the wicket of ſenſe, it is almoſt impoſſible for man to conceive the *Idea* of any thing but veſted with ſome ſhape, as each man's private reflections will abundantly convince him.

As the boundleſs Ocean keeps and ſhews its well-drawn images, whilſt it ſtands quiet, with a face poliſh'd like a chryſtal cake, but loſes them immediately, how ſoon its proud waves begin to ſwell and enrage, to ſpit its froathy foam in the face of the angry Heavens; ſo, whilſt a Stoical indolency and Chriſtian repoſe ſmooths our reſtleſs ſpirits, it is only then, that the ſoul of man can be ſaid to retain that glorious image of God Almighty, with which

it

it was impreſſed at its created nativity. But, when the waves of choler begin to roar, or the winds of vanity to blow, then that glorious image is no more to be diſcerned in him, than the ſhadows and repreſentations of in-looking objects are to be ſeen and diſcerned in the diſquieting boſom of the troubled waters.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Of the immortality of the soul.

THe stings of a natural conscience, which, according to each mans actings, create to him either agues of fear, or paradises of joy, do by these omniating presages, convince us of the immortality of the soul: and seeing we see its predictions, both in dreams, in damps of melancholy, and such like enthusiastic fits, followed by suitable events; why may we not likewise believe its predictions as to its own immortality; it being the prudence of a *Virtuoso* to lay hold of every mean, which may allay the rage of his hereditary misfortunes? And to what end would the soul of man receive such impressions of fear and hope, if, by its mortality, it were not to be stated in a condition

condition, wherein its fears and hopes were to have ſuteable rewards or puniſhments? Moreover, ſeeing God is juſt, He will puniſh and reward; and therefore, ſeeing he puniſhes and rewards not men according to their merits, or demerits here, there muſt be doubtleſs a future ſtate wherein that is to be expected. But, that which convinces my private judgment moſt of this truth, is, that the nobleſt Souls, and the ſharpeſt-ſighted, do, of all others, moſt deſire the ſtate of ſeparation, and have the weakeſt attachs to this life; which muſt doubtleſs proceed from an aſſurance of immortality, and that it hath, from the *Piſgah* of its contemplation, got a view of the ſpiritual *Canaan*: For, ſeeing the brutiſheſt of creatures abhors annihilation, as the moſt averſable ill in nature, doubtleſs the ſoul of man, which is the moſt divine of all creatures, would never appete this ſeparation, if by it, it were to be extinct and to be no more.

more. And how absurd were it to believe, that man's soul should be made after Gods image, and yet conclude it mortal, a quality repugnant to any thing that is divine? As also, how can the soul be thought to perish with the body, seeing these accidents which destroy the body cannot reach it? how can the heat of a fever burn, or rheumes drown, that which is not corporeal and cannot be touched? And, seeing mans least peccadilio against God Almighty, is against one who is infinit, were it not absurd to think, that it could be proportionally punished in the swift glass of mans short life? than which, nothing is more finite, or sooner finished.

As the soul is God's Image, so its products are the Images of His admirable operations. Do not Mathematicians create Eagles, Doves, and such like *Automata's*? And spring not flowers from the Chymists glasses? And thus Art, which is man's off-

spring,

ſpring, doth ape nature, which is the workmanſhip of the Almighty: and therefore, ſeeing the ſoul can, with one thought, graſp both the Poles, can dart out it's conceits as far as the fartheſt borders of the imaginary ſpaces, create worlds, and order, and diſorder, all that is in this which is already created; it's ſtrange to think it to be either corporeal or mortal: For, if it were corporeal and a maſs of blood, its actings would be lent and dull, neither could its motions be ſo nimble and winged, as are theſe of our agile ſpirits. It were impoſſible for our narrow heads, to inn all theſe innumerable *Ideas* (which are now in them) if theſe were all corporeal; and if theſe be not corporeal, that which produces them moſt be doubtleſs incorporeal, ſeeing *ſimile generatur a ſimili*; and dull fleſh and blood could never produce ſuch ſpiritual emanations.

As the ſoul is Gods Image, ſo, in this it reſembles Him very much, that

we

we can know nothing of its nature without its own assistance: like a dark lanthorn, or a spy, it discovers every thing to us, except it self. And because it refuses us the light of its candle, whilest we are in the quest of its mysteries; therefore it is, that our re-searches of its nature are gropings in the dark: and so ofttimes vain, if not ridiculous. *Avicenna*, *Averroes*, and the remnant of that Arabian tribe, admiring its prodigious effects, did attribute our spiritual motions to assisting Angels; as if such admirable notions could not be fathered upon less sublime causes; which *Cardan* likewise thinks, do offer their assistance and light to sensitive creatures, but that the churlishness of their matter will not suffer them to entertain such pure eradiations. This disparages so much humanity, making man only a statue, that it were against the souls interest to admit of any such *Ideas*: For, as it tends more to the Artists praise to

cauſe his products move from hid and internal ſprings, than from extrinſick cauſes; as we ſee in Watches and ſuch like. So it is more for the honor of that great Artiſt', and more ſuitable to the Being and nature of His creatures, that all its operations flow from it ſelf, than from aſſiſting but exterior coadjutors; which makes me averſe from *Ariſtotle's* opinion, of the motion of the ſpheres by intelligences. And it were abſurd to think, that men ſhould be blamed or praiſed for thoſe effects which their aſſeſſor Angels could only be charged with. The *Platonics* alledged, that all ſouls exiſted before their incarceration in bodies; in which ſtate of pre-exiſtence, they were doted with all theſe ſpiritual endowments, which ſhall attend them in the ſtate of ſeparation; and that at their firſt allyance with bodies, their native knowledge was clouded επιστημης αναβολη, *with the putting off knowledge for a time*, till by a *reminiſcentia*, their intelect-

uals

uals revived, as by a reſurrection. And *Origen* added, that theſe ſouls were, according to their eſcapes, committed in the ſtate of their primitive ſeparation, yoaked with better or worſe bodies; a ſhift taken, in all probability, by him, to evite the apprehenſion of God's being unjuſt, for infuſing innocent ſouls, into bodies which would infect them; and, by drawing them into inevitable ſnares, at laſt condemn them; or at leaſt their infuſion was the impriſoning thoſe who were not guilty; a difficulty which ſtraits much, ſuch as maintain that the ſoul is not *ex traduce*. What the hazard of this opinion may be, my twilight is not able to diſcover.

It may be, that the *Stoicks* miſtake in making the ſouls of men to be but parcels, decerpt from that univerſal *anima mundi* (by which they doubtleſs meant God Himſelf) was occaſioned by a miſtake of that Text, that

God

God breathed into man's noſtrils, the breath of life: concluding, that as the breath is a part of the body which breathed it; ſo the ſoul behoved to be a part of that divine eſſence; from which, by a ſecond conſequence, they concluded, that the ſoul, being a part of that divine Being, could not ſuffer, nor undergo any torments; as is aſſerted by *Seneca, Epiſt.* 29. *Cicero, Tuſc.* 5. and defended by their ſucceſſors, thoſe primitive Heretics, the *Gnoſticks*, *Maniches* and *Priſcillianiſts*. But this Baſtard is not worth the foſtering, being an opinion that God hath parts, and man real divinity; and is doubtleſs a falſe and flattering teſtimony given by the ſoul to it ſelf. For, ſeeing the ſoul is, by divine Oracles, told us to be made after God's Image, it can be no more called a part of God, than the picture ſhould be reputed a part of the Painter.

Ariſtotle, like the Devil (who becauſe he knows not what to anſwer,

answers ever in Engines) tells us, that *Anima* is ἐντελέχεια, a term fixed to exercise the empty brains of curious Pedants, and apter to beget, than explicate difficulties. Neither believe I, that his three souls, which he lodges in man, to wit, the rational, sensitive and vegetative, do differ more amongst themselves, than the will, understanding and fancy differ from the two last: So that his arithmetick might have bestowed five souls upon man, as well as three: But seeing he, and many of his Disciples, believe these to be three, and yet these three to be but one; I admire why they should be so nice, as not to believe that pious mystery of the holy Trinity: whereof, in my opinion, his trinity of the soul is as apposite an emblem, as was the conceit of a simple Clown, who being askt, how he could apprehend the three glorious persons to be but one? did fold his garment in three pleats, and thereafter drew out all three in one.

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As the heraldrie of our reason cannot blazen the soul's *impressa*; so can it not help us to line out its descent: and such would appear to be the excellency of that noble creature, that Heaven and Earth seem to contend, the which shall be the place of its nativity. Divines (who are obliged to contend for Heaven, because they are its more immediate Pensioners) will have it to be created and infused; whereas Philosophers (ambitious to have so noble a compatriot, and willing to gratifie nature, which aliments their sublime meditations) contend, that it is *ex traduce*, and is in generation, the bodies other twin. And albeit it would appear from Scripture, that God accomplish'd the Creation the first seven days, and that nature did then pass child-bearing: Yet, that, in my judgment, must be meant of the Creation of whole *species*, and not of *individuals*: And to press the souls not traduction, I shall lend only one argument, not

becauſe it is the beſt, but becauſe it is my own. We ſee, that there where the ſoul is confeſs'd to be *ex traduce*, as in brutes and vegetative creatures, that nature, at it were, with a pencil, copies the young from off the old. The young Lyons are ſtill as rapacious and roaring as were their Syres from whoſe loyns they deſcended: and the Roſe being pous'd up by the ſalt nitre which makes it vegetative, ſpreads the ſame leaves, and appears with the ſame bluſhes or paleneſs that beautified its eye-pleaſing predeceſſors. The reaſon of which continual aſſimulation proceeds from the ſeed's having in its boſom all theſe qualities and ſhapes, which appear thereafter in its larger products, whereof they were but a *Map*, or *Index*. Whereas man reſembles never, at leaſt not oft, thoſe who ere called his parents: the vitious and tall father, having oft low, but virtuous children; which ſhows, that the ſoul of man is not derived

rived by generation, and that the ſoul beſtowed upon the ſon's body, is moſt different and aſymbolic to that which lodged in the father. And this may be farther confirmed by that excellent paſſage, *Prov.* 20. 27. where it is ſaid, that the *underſtanding of man is the candle of the Lord.* Our Soul is God's Image, and none can draw that Image but Himſelf; we are the ſtamp of His divine nature, and ſo can only be formed by Himſelf, who is the glorious Seal.

From this divine principle, that man's ſoul is made after God's Image, I am almoſt induced to believe, that *propheſie* is no miraculous gift beſtowed upon the ſoul at extraordinary occaſions only, but is a natural (though the higheſt) perfection of our humane nature: For, if it be natural for the ſtamp, to have impreſs'd upon it all the traits that dwell upon the face of the Seal; then it muſt be natural to the ſoul, which is God's *impreſſa*, to

have a faculty of foreseeing; since that is one of God's excellencies. Albeit I confess, that that Stamp is here infinitely be-dimm'd and worn off; as also, we know, by experience, that men, upon a death-bed, when the soul begins (being detached by sickness from the bodies slavery) to act, like it self, do foresee and foretell many remote and improbable events: and for the same reason I do think predictions, by dreams, not to be extraordinary revelations, but rather the products natural of a rational soul. And if sagacious men can be so sharp-sighted in this state of glimmering, as to foresee many events which fall out, why may we not say, that man, if he were rehabilitated in the former state of pure nature, might, without any extraordinary assistance, foresee and propheſie? For, there is not such a distance betwixt that foresight and propheſie, as is betwixt the two

states

ſtates of innocency and corruption; according to the received notions, which men have ſetled to themſelves of that primitive ſtate of innocency.

From the ſame principle, may it likewiſe be deduced, that natural reaſon cannot but be an excellent mean, for knowing, as far as is poſſible, the glorious nature of God Almighty: He hath doubtleſs lighted this candle, that we might, by it, ſee Himſelf: and how can we better know the Seal, than by looking upon its impreſſion. And if Religion and its myſteryes, cannot be comprehended by reaſon, I confeſs it is a pretty jeſt, to hear ſuch frequent reaſonings amongſt Churchmen, in matters of Religion. And albeit *faith* and *reaſon* be look'd upon as *Jacob* and *Eſau*, whereof the younger only hath the bleſſing, and are, by Divines, placed at the two oppoſite points of the Diameter; yet upon a ſuperficial in-

quiry, it would appear, by the Laws of his Country, that *faith* is but ſublimated reaſon, calcined by that divine Chymical fire of Baptiſme; and that the ſoul of man hath lurking, in it, all thoſe virtues and faculties which we call Theological; ſuch as *faith*, *hope* and *repentance*: for elſe *David* would not have prayed, *Inlighten Lord, my eyes, that I may ſee the wonders of thy Law*; but rather, *Lord, beſtow new eyes upon me.* Neither could the opening of *Lidias* heart, have been ſufficient for her converſion, if theſe preexiſting qualities had not been treaſur'd up there formerly: So that it would appear, that theſe holy flames lurk under the aſhes of corruption, untill God, by the breath of His Spirit (and that wind which bloweth where it liſteth) ſweep them off: And that God, having once made man perfect in the firſt Creation, doth not, in his regeneration, ſuper-add any new faculty (for elſe the ſoul had not at firſt been

been perfect) but only removes all obstructing impediments.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Faith and Reason.

I am always ashamed, when I hear *reason* called the stepmother of *faith*, and proclaimed rebell against God Almighty; and such declared traitors, as dare harbor it, or appear in its defence. These are such fools as they who break their Prospects, because they bring not home to their sight the remotest objects; and are as injust as *Jacob* had been, if he had divorced from *Leah*, because she was tender-eyed: whereas, we should not put ont the eyes of our understanding, but should beg from God the eye-salve of His Spirit for their illumination. Nor should we dash the Prospect of our reason, against

gainſt the rocky walls of diſpair; but ſhould rather waſh its glaſſes with the tears of unfeigned repentance.

Ever ſince *faith* and *reaſon* have been, by Divines, ſet by the ears, the brutiſh multitude conclude, thoſe who are moſt reaſonable to be leaſt religious; and the greateſt ſpirits to be the leaſt ſpiritual: a conceit moſt inconſiſtent with that divine parable, wherein thoſe who received the many talents, improved them to the beſt advantage, whilſt he who had but one, laid it up in a napkin. And it is moſt improbable, that God, would chooſe low ſhrubs, and not tall Cedars, for the building of his glorious Temple. And it is remarkable, that God, in the old Law, refuſed to accept the firſt-born of an aſſe in ſacrifice, but not of any other creature. And ſome, who were content to be called *Atheiſts*, providing they were thought Wits, did take advantage, in this, of the *Rables* ignorance, and authorized; by their deviliſh invention,

on, what was at first but a mistake: and this unriddles to us that mystery, why the greatest Wits are most frequently the greatest Atheists.

When I consider, how the Angels, who have no bodies, sinned before man; and that brutes, who are all body, sin not at all, but follow the pure dictates of nature; I am induced to believe, that the body is rather injustly blamed for Being, than that really it is, the occasion of sin; and probably, the witty soul hath, in this, cunningly laid over upon its fellow, that wherewith it self is only to be charged. What influence can flesh or blood have upon that which is immaterial? no more sure than the case hath upon the Watch, or the Heavens upon its burgessing Angels? And see we not, that when the soul hath bid the body adieu, it remains a carcass, fit nor able for nothing? I believe, that the body being a clog to it, may slow its pursuite after objects, and that it may occasion

caſion, indirectly, ſome ſins of omiſſion: For, we ſee palpably, that eating and drinking dulls our devotions; but, I can never underſtand how ſuch dumb Orators, as fleſh and blood, can perſuade the ſoul to commit the leaſt ſin. And thus, albeit our Saviour ſays, that *fleſh and blood did not teach* Peter *to give him his true Epithets*; neither indeed could it: Yet, our Saviour imputes not any actual ſin to theſe pithleſs cauſes. And ſeeing our firſt ſin hath occaſioned all our after-ſinning, certainly, that which occaſioned our firſt ſin was the main ſource of ſinning, and this was doubtleſs the ſoul: for, our firſt ſin being an immoderate deſire of knowledge, was the effect and product of our ſpirit, becauſe it was a ſpiritual ſin; whereas had it been gluttony, luſt or ſuch like, which ſeems corporeal, the body had been more to have been blamed for it. And in this conteſt, I am of opinion, that the ſoul wins the cauſe, becauſe it is the beſt Orator.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Of the fall of Angels, and what their ſin was.

WHat was the occaſion of the firſt ill, is much debated (and moſt deſervedly) amongſt Moraliſts, for, that which was good could not produce that which was evil; ſeeing that which works miſcheif cannot be called good. Nor can we aſcribe the efficiency of the firſt evil to evil: for then the queſtion recurrs, what was the cauſe of that evil? And by, this, the ſuppoſition is likewiſe deſtroyed, whereby the evil enquired after, is ſuppoſed to be the firſt evil: but, if we enquire, what could produce in the Angels that firſt ſin, whereby they forfeited their glory? we will find this diſquiſition moſt myſterious. And it is commonly believed,

leived, but by what revelation I know not, that their pride cauſed their fall; and that they catch'd their bruiſe in climbing; in deſiring to be equal to their Creator, they are become inferior to all their fellow Creatures. Yet, this ſeems to me moſt ſtrange, that theſe excellent ſpirits, whoſe very ſubſtance was light, and who ſurpaſſed far, man, in capacity and underſtanding, ſhould have ſo erred, as to imagine that equality feiſable: a fancy which the fondeſt of men could not have entertained. And it were improbable to ſay, that their error could have ſprouted at firſt from their underſtanding; and to think it to have been ſo groſs, as that fallen man doth now admire it: but, why may we not rather think, that their firſt error was rather a crookedneſs in their will, than a blindneſs in their judgment, and that they fretted to ſee Man, whom they knew to be inferior to themſelves, by many ſtages, made Lord of all that pleaſant Creation, which they gazed

on

on with a ſtareing maze. And that this opinion is more probable, appears, becauſe this Sin was the far more baiting, ſeeing it appeared with all the charms, wherewith either pride, vanity or avarice could busk it; and explicates better to us the occaſion of all that enmity with which that Serpent hath always ſince purſued ſilly man. But, whether God will ſave juſt as many believers as there are fallen of the Angels, none can determine; neither can it be rationally deduced from that Scripture, *Statuit terminos gentium, juxta numerum Angelorum Dei.* But if it pleaſe God ſo to order it, it will doubtleſs aggrage their puniſhment, by rackling their diſdain.

And ſeeing the Angels have never obtained a remiſſion for this crime, it is probable, that the correſpondent of their ſin is, in us, the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt.

The ſin of the Angels and the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt.

For, if their *lapſe* had been pardonable,

donable, ſome one or other of them had, in all probability eſcaped; but, if this was not that unpardonable ſin, I ſcarce ſee where it ſhall be found. For, to ſay that it is a hating of Good, as *God*, is to make it unpracticable, rather than unpardonable: For, all creatures appete naturally what is good, and God, as *God*, is good; So that it is impoſſible that He can be hated under that reduplication.

It may be likewiſe conjectured, that voluntary and deliberate ſacriledge is the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt; becauſe *Ananias* and *Saphira*, in withholding from the Church, a part of the price for which they ſold their lands, are, by *Peter*, ſaid to have lyed, not to man, but to the holy Ghoſt; and his wife is there ſaid to have tempted the Spirit: but, ſeeing both of them reſolved to continue in the Church (a reſolution inconſiſtent with the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt) and ſeeing many ſins are more hein-

ous,

pus, I cannot interpret this lying to the holy Ghoſt to be any thing elſe but a ſin againſt light, in which moſt penitents have been involved: albeit, I confeſs, this was a groſs eſcape, ſeeing it rob'd God of His *omniſciency*, and ſuppoſed that He was not privy to ſuch humane actings as have not the Sun for a witneſs. I do then conclude, that the ſin againſt the holy Ghoſt may rather be a reſolute undervaluing of God, and a ſcorning to receive a pardon from Him: and this is that which makes the Angels fall irrecoverably, and, like the flaming ſword, defends them from their re-entry into that Paradiſe from which they are exiled. And albeit to ſay, that the Angels rebellion flows from God's denying them repentance, may ſuit abundantly well with His unſtainable Juſtice; yet, it is hard to reconcile it with his mercy. And this makes my private judgment place the unpardonableneſs of this ſin, not in God's Decree, but in their obdu-

ration and rebellious impenitency: And the reaſon why thoſe who commit this ſin are never pardoned, is, becauſe a pardon is never ſought. That place of Scripture wherein *Eſau* is ſaid to have ſought the bleſſing with tears and not to have found it, aſtoniſhes me: Yet, I believe, that if his tears had ſtreamed from a ſenſe of his guilt more than of his puniſhment, doubtleſs he had not wept in vain; and in that he tear'd, he was no more to be pytied, far leſs pardoned, than a Malefactor, who upon the ſcaffold grants ſome few tears to the importunity of his tortures, but ſcornes to acknowledge the guilt of his crime; *for, pain, by contracting our bodies, ſtrains out that liquid matter, which thereafter globe's it ſelf in tears*; there could come no holy water from the pagan font of *Eſau*'s eyes; and if his remorſe could have pierc'd his own heart, it had eaſily pierc'd Heaven. Whilſt others admire, I bleſs God, that He hath clos'd up the knowledge of that unpardon-

pardonable sin under his own privy Seal: for, seeing Sathan tempts me to sin with hopes of an after pardon, this bait is pull'd off his hook, by the fear I stand under, that the Sin to which I am tempted, is that Sin which can expect no Pardon, and albeit it be customary amongst men to beacon and set a mark upon such shelves and rocks as destroy passengers; yet, that is only done where commerce is allowed and sayling necessary; But, seeing all sin is forbidden, God was not obliged to guard us with the knowledge of that sin, no farther than by prohibiting us not to sin, but to stand in awe.

CHAP. XVI.

Of Man's fall.

THat first sin whereby our first Parents forfeited their primitive excellencies was so pitiful a frail-

ty, that I think we ſhould rather lament, than enquire after it. To think that an Apple had in it the ſeeds of all knowledge, or that it could aſſimilate him to his Creator, and could, in an inſtant, ſublimate his nature, was a frailty to be admired in one of his piety and knowledge. Yet, I admire not that the breach of ſo mean a Precept was puniſh'd with ſuch appearing rigor; becauſe, the eaſier the command was, the contempt was proportionally the greater; and the firſt crimes are by Legiſlators puniſhed, not only for guilt, but for example: But I rather admire what could perſuade the facile world to believe, that *Adam* was created, not only innocent, but even ſtored with all humane knowledge; For, beſides that, we have no Warrant from Scripture for this alledgiance, this his eaſie eſcape ſpeaketh far otherwiſe.

And albeit the Scripture tells us, that man was created perfect; yet, that infers not that man was furniſhed

fied with all humane knowledge: For, his perfection consisted in his adoring of, and depending upon God, wherein we see those are exactest, whose judgments are least pesterd with terrestrial knowledge; and least diverted with unnecessary speculations. And thus it appears, that those Sciences, after which his posterity pants, were not intended as noble *appanages* of that rational soul, but are rather toyish babies buskt up by fall'n man, whereby he diverts himself from reflecting too narrowly upon his native frailty. And thus Scripture tells us, *that God made man perfect, but that he sought out to Himself many inventions*; where perfection and invention seem to be stated as enemies; and it is palpable that those Sciences, which are by us lawrel'd and rewarded, are such as were inconsistent with that state of innocency, such as Law, Theology and Physick. And as for the rest, it is absurd to think, that *Adam's* happiness

did consist in the knowledge of those things which we our selves account either impertinent or superfluous. But, that which convinces me most of this, is that we forfeited nothing by *Adam's* fall, which Christ's death restores not to us; wherefore, seeing Christ by his own, or his Apostles promises, hath not assured us of any sublunary or school knowledge; nor hath our experience taught us, that Sciences are entailed upon the Saints. I almost believe, that *Adam* neither possest these before, nor yet lost them by his fall. Neither think I St. *Paul* the more imperfect, that he desired to know nothing but Christ and him Crucified: So that the difference betwixt *Adam*, and his successors, stood more in the straightness of his affections, than in the depth of his knowledge. For, albeit it be believed that the names whereby he baptized the creatures were full histories of their natures, written in short hand; yet, this is

but

but a conjecture authorized by no holy Text. It is a more civil error in the Jewiſh Talmudiſts, to think that all the creatures were brought to *Adam*, to let him ſee, that there were none amongſt them fit to be his companion, nor none ſo beautiful as *Eve*; than it is in their Cabaliſts to obſerve, that the Hebrew word, ſignifying *man*, doth, by a tranſpoſition of letters, ſignifie likewiſe, *benediction*; and the word ſignifying *woman*, makes up *malediction*. If we ſhould take a character of *Adam's* knowledge from the Scriptures, we ſhall find more imprudence charged upon him than upon any of his Succeſſors: For, albeit the ſilly woman was not deceived without the help of ſubtilty; yet *Adam* ſinned upon a bare ſuggeſtion, and thereafter was ſo ſimple, as to hide himſelf, when God called him to an account; as if a thicket of trees could have ſconced him from his all-ſeeing Maker; and when he was accuſed, was ſo ſimple,

as to think his wives commands ſufficient to exoner him; and ſo abſurd, as to make God Himſelf ſharer with him in his guilt, *the woman whom thou gaveſt me*, &c.

There is more charm in acquiring new knowledge, than in reflecting upon what we have already gain'd, (as if the *ſpecies* of known objects did corrupt, by being treaſur'd up in our brains) And this induces me to believe, that our ſcantneſs of native knowledge, is rather a happineſs than a puniſhment; the Citizens of *London* or *Paris* are not ſo tickled by the ſight of thoſe ſtately Cities, as ſtrangers who were not born within their walls; and I may ſay to ſuch, as, by ſpelling the Starrs, deſire to read the fortunes of others, as our Saviour ſaid to *Peter*, when he was deſirous to know the horoſcope of the beloved Apoſtle, *What is that to thee?* What can it advantage us to know the correſpondence kept amongſt the Planets, and to underſtand the whole

Anatomy

Anatomy of natures *Sceleton*; in gazing upon whose parts, we are oftimes as ridiculous as children, who love to leaf over tandouce Pictures; for in both variety is all the usury that can be expected, as the return of our time and pains; and if we pry inly into this small mass of our present knowledge, we shall find, that our knowledge is one of the fertilest fountains of our misery. For, do not such as know that they are sick, groan more heavily than a Country Clown, who apprehends nothing till extremity creates in him some sense? And, doubtless the reason why children and ideots endure more, and drunken men escape more dangers than others, is because albeit they cannot provide such apt remedies, yet, they are less acquainted with what they feel than we are. Are not those who understand that they are affronted, more vex'd than such as are ignorant of these misfortunes? And those who foresee the changes and revolutions,

which

which are to befall either their friends or their Countries, are thereby more ſadly diſeaſed, than he who ſees no farther than his noſe. Our Saviour wept when He did foreſee, that one ſtone of *Jeruſalem* ſhould not be left upon another; and when *Hazael* askt *Eliſha* why he wept, he told him, it was becauſe he did foreſee what miſchief *Hazael* was to do in *Iſrael*. Let us not then complain of the loſs of *Adam*'s knowledge, but of his innoceney; we know enough to ſave us, and what is more than that that is ſuperuflous.

Adam cannot be thought to have been the firſt ſinner, for *Eve* ſinned before him; So that albeit it ſeem a Paradox, yet it is moſt probable, that albeit *Adam* had for ever abſtained from eating the *forbidden fruit*, his poſterity had been ſtill as miſerable as now they are; ſeeing the guilt of either of the Parents had been ſufficient to daſh the innocence of the children. For as the Scripture tells us, Who can bring a clean thing out

of

of an unclean? And *David*, in that Text, which of all others ſpeaks moſt expreſly of original ſin, layes the guilt upon her, and confeſſeth only, that his mother had conceived him inſin.

As *Adam* was not the firſt ſinner, ſo the eating of the Apple may be juſtly thought not to be the firſt ſin; *Eve* having, before his eating the Apple, repeated moſt falſely the Command. For, whereas God did aſſure them, *that in that day they did eat the fruit they ſhould ſurely dye*: *Eve* relates it thus, *Ye ſhall not eat the fruit, leſt ye dye*, repreſenting only that as a contingent which was moſt certain: and whereas God had only ſaid, *ye ſhall not eat of the fruit of the tree*, *Eve* ſays, *God ſaid, ye ſhall not touch it*; which it may be furniſhed the ſerpent with this argument to cheat her; Ye ſee God hath deceived you, for the fruit may be touched without danger, why may it not be eaten without hazzard? and it is probable, that he hath failed in the one as well as in the other.

But

But to abſtract from this, it cannot be ſaid, that the eating of the *forbidden fruit* was the firſt ſin; for, before *Adam* did eat thereof, he behoved both to believe the Serpent and miſbelieve his Maker; and thus *miſ-belief* was the firſt ſin: For after he had credited the Serpents report, he was no longer innocent, and ſo he did not eat the Apple till after his fall. What wiſer are thoſe Divines, who debate, whether *Adam's* falling-ſickneſs and ſin had become hereditary, if our predeceſſors had come out of his loins before he ſinned, than thoſe who combated for the largeſt ſhare of the King of *Spain's* gold, if it had been to be divided?

In the Almightie's procedure againſt poor *Adam* for this crime, His infinite mercy appears to admiration; and God foreſeeing, that man might ſharpen the ax of juſtice too much upon the whetſtone of private revenge, ſeems to have, in this proceſs, formed to him, an exact model of Inquiſition

quiſition. For, He arraigns and cries *Adam, Adam, where art thou?* He ſhews him his dittay, *Haſt thou eat of the fruit whereof I commanded thee that thou ſhouldeſt not eat?* He allows him exculpation, *Who told thee?* and in order thereto did examine the woman, upon whom *Adam* did transfer the guilt. And albeit nothing could eſcape His omniſciency, and that He did ſee *Adam* eat the Apple; yet, to teach Judges that they ſhould walk according to what is proved, and not according to what they are themſelves conſcious to, He did not condemn him till firſt he ſhould have a confeſſion from his own mouth. And thus, *Gen.* 18. 21. the Lord ſayes, *Becauſe the cry of* Sodom *is great——I will go down and ſee whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it*, &c. And in the laſt place, albeit the fatal decree did bear, *In the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die*; yet, were his days prolonged nine hundred and thirty years after

after the sin was commited. It is too curious a disquisition to enquire how God can be said to be merciful, mercy being the mitigation of justice; of which His pure nature cannot be capable, seeing whatever He wills is just: And so He cannot be thought, in any thing which He wills, to recede from justice: and so can no more properly be said to be merciful, than one Act can be both the Law and the mitigation of the Law. But I will press no point of this nature, knowing that humble modesty is the best Theology.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Stile of Genesis.

THe *Vatican* of Paganism cannot, for the maleness of it's stile, match that matchless Book of *Genesis*, whereof each sentence seems a quarry of rich meditations, and each word a spell, sufficient to conjure the Devil

of

of *Delphos*. Might not that excellent expreſſion, *Let us make man after our image*, convince any of the Being of a Trinity, who deny plurality of Gods? It is wonderful, that the Saturn-humor'd Jew can, in this paſſage, miſ-take his own Saviour; and it is ſtrange that he ſhould not, from the triangular architecture of his own heart, conclude the Trinity of the God-head, whoſe temple it was appointed to be. Albeit I be an admirer of this nurſe of Cabaliſm; yet, I approve not the conceit of thoſe doting Rabbies, who teach that God, from His own mouth, indited both the words and matter of the *Pentateuch*; whereas, He furniſhed only to the other Prophets the matter and ſubject unphraſed: for, not only did God promiſe, that he ſhould put His words in their mouths, but likewiſe, they preface thus their own propheſies, In the days of ſuch a King, the Word of the Lord came to ſuch a Prophet, ſaying,

saying, *&c.* Neither is this conceit consistent with that high esteem, which they, (even in this) intend for their patron, *Moses*; seeing it allows him less trust from his divine Master, than the other Penmen of Scripture had reposed in them.

CHAP. XVIII.

Why Man fell.

THat brain hath too little *pia mater*, that is too curious to know, why God, who evidences so great a desire to save poor man, and is so powerful, as that his salvation needed ever have run the hazzard, if His infinit wisdom had so decree'd, did yet suffer him to fall: For, if we enteronce the list of that debate, our reason is too weak to bear the burden of so great a difficulty. And albeit it may be answered, that God might

might have reſtrained man, but that reſtraint did not ſtand with the freedom of man's will which God had beſtowed upon him; yet, this anſwer ſtops not the mouth of the difficulty. For certainly, if one ſhould detain a mad man from running over a precipice, he could not be thereby ſaid to have wronged his liberty: and ſeeing man is, by many Divines, allowed a freedom of will, albeit he muſt of neceſſity do what is evil, and that his freedom is ſalv'd by a liberty to chooſe only one of more evils, it would appear ſtrange why his liberty might not have conſiſted well enough with a moral impoſſibility of ſinning, and might not have been abundantly conſerved in his freedom to chooſe one of more goods: yet, theſe reaſonings are the calling God to an account; and ſo impious. For, if God had firſt created man ſurrounded with our preſent infirmities, could we have complained? Why then ſhould we now complain, ſeeing we

are but fall'n to a better estate than we deserved; seeing we stumbled not for want of light, but because we extinguish'd our own lights; and seeing our Saviours dying for us may yet reinstate us in an happier estate than that from which we are now fall'n?

Albeit the glass of my years hath not yet turn'd five and twenty, yet the curiosity I have to know the different *limbo's* of departed souls, and to view the card of the region of death, would give me abundance of courage to encounter this King of terrors, though I were a Pagan: But, when I consider what joys are prepared for them who fear the Almighty, and what craziness attends such as sleep in *Methusalem's* Cradle, I pity them who make *long-life* one of the oftest repeated Petitions of their *Pater noster*, and yet, those sure are the more advanc'd in folly, who desire to have their names enshrin'd, after death, in the airy monument of *fame*: Whereas it is one of the promises made to the Elect, *That they shall rest*

from their labors, and their works ſhall follow them. Moſt mens mouths are ſo foul, that it is a puniſhment to be much in them: for my own part, I deſire the ſame good offices from any good name that I do from my cloaths; which is to ſkreen me from the violence of exterior accidents.

As thoſe Criminals might be judg'd diſtracted, who being condemned to die, would ſpend their ſhort reprival in diſputing about the ſituation and fabric of their gibbets: So may I juſtly think thoſe *literati* mad, who ſpend the ſhort time allotted them for Repentance, in debating about the ſeat of Hell, and the torments of tortur'd ſpirits. To ſatisfie my curioſity, I was once reſolv'd, with the Platonic, to take the promiſe of ſome dying friend, that he ſhould return and ſatisfie me in all my private doubts concerning hell and heaven; yet I was juſtly afraid, that he might have return'd me the ſame anſwer which *Abraham* return'd to *Dives*, *Have they*

not Moſes *and the Prophets? if they hear not them, wherefore will they be perſuaded though one ſhould riſe from the dead?*

CHAP. XIX.

A Refutation of the Millenarians.

THe *Millenar's* Ephimerides, which aſſure us, that Chriſt ſhall reign a thouſand years with the Saints on earth, is as ſenſual an opinion as that of the *Turks*, who make Heaven a brothel, wherein we ſhall ſatisfie our Venereous appetites; for the one ſhews the vain glory and vindictive humor of the Saints, as palpably as the other ſhews the luſt of the Mahumetans. If Chriſt's reigning ſo many years be for convincing the world that he is the real *Meſſiah*, their hereſie ſhould have ante-dated his coming, and his reign ſhould rather have begun long ſince, when many ages were to be converted; or at leaſt it ſhould not have been thruſt out upon the ſelvage and border of time,

time, when very few ſhall remain to be convinc'd: and if in this they intend a diſplaying of Chriſt's glory, certainly they are miſtaken; for what honor can it be for a King, to have his foot-ſtool made his Throne? So that I think, theſe poor Phanatics have taken the patronage of this error rather by neceſſity than choice, all other opinions and conceits being formerly preengaged to other Authors.

CHAP. XX.

The Author's Cenſure of this Eſſay, and an Account of his Deſign.

AS I am not able, by the *Jacob's ladder* of my merits, to ſcale Heaven; ſo am I leſs able, by the *Jacob's ſtaff* of my private ability, to take up the true altitude of its myſteries. I have travel'd no farther in

Theology than a *Sabbath-days* journey; and therefore, it were arrogance in me to offer a map of it to the credulous world: But, if I were worthy to be consulted in these spiritual securities, I should advise every private Christian, rather to stay still in the barge of the Church, with the other Disciples, than by an ill bridled zeal, to hazard drowning alone with *Peter*, by offering to walk upon the unstable surface of his own fleeting and water-weak fancies, though with a pious resolution to meet our Saviour. For, albeit one may be a real Christian, and yet differ from the Church, which says, that the wise men who came to bow before our Saviour's Cradle-throne, were three Kings, and in such other opinions as these, wherein the fundamentals of faith and quiet of the Church are no ways concerned; yet certainly, he were no wise man himself, nor yet sound Christian, who would not, even in these, bow the flag of his private

vate opinion to the commands of the Church. The Church is our Mother, and therefore we should wed no opinion without her consent who is our Parent; or if we have rashly wedded any, it is in the power of the Church and her Officials to grant us a divorce. As for my self, my vanity never prompted me to be standard-bearer to any, either new Sect, or old Heresie; and I pity such as love to live like Pew-keepers in the House of God, busied in seating others, without ever providing a room for themselves. If there be any thing in this Discourse which may offend such as are really pious, it shall much grieve me, who above all men honour them most. What I have spoken against cases of Conscience and the like, strikes not against their Christian fellowship and correspondence, but against the apish fopperies of pretending counterfeits. It shall always be my endeavour, for the future, rather to drop tears for my own sins and the

ſins of others, then yrk for their converſion: our prayers help ſuch as never heard them, whereas thoſe only who read our diſcourſes are better'd by them. *Abraham's* prayers prevailed more with God (even for *Sodom*) than *Lot's* reitterated Sermons; and no wonder that the ſucceſs be unequal, ſeeing in the one we have to do with a mereiful God; whereas in the other we muſt perſuade a hard-hearted people.

I intend not to purchaſe, from poſterity, the title of *Reformer*, ſeeing moſt of theſe have fall'n under the ſame guilt; and have had the ſame fate, with that curious Painter; who having drawn an excellent *face*, as happily as could have been expected from the ſmootheſt mirror, did thereafter daſh it afreſh upon the ſuggeſtion of each intrant, till at laſt he reformed it from being any way like to the Original.

Divinity differs in this from all other Sciences, that theſe being inven-

ted

ted by mortals, receive growth from time and experience; whereas, it being penn'd by the ommniſcient Spirit of God, can receive no addition without receiving prejudice. It is moſt remarkable, that our Saviour's Prayers, His Sermons and the *Creed*, delivered to us by his Apoſtles, were roomed up in far narrower bounds than theſe of our times, which an hydropſie of ill concocted opinions hath ſwell'd beyond their true dimenſions: many whereof have either been brooded by *vanity* or *intereſt*; or elſe ignorant and violent defendents being brought to a bay, by ſuch as impugn'd their reſolv'd-upon principles, have been forc'd to aſſert theſe by-blow and preter-intentional *tenets*; and having once floored them have thereafter judg'd themſelves concerned to defend them, in point of Scholaſtic honor. Some well-meaning Chriſtians likewiſe, do ſometimes, for maintenance of what is lawful and pious, think, that they may lawfully advance

advance opinions, which otherwise they would never have allowed of; and as in nature we see, that the collision of two hard bodies makes them rebound so much the farther from one another: so opposition makes both parties fly into extremities. Thus I believe, that the debate betwixt *Roman-Catholics* and *Protestants*, concerning the Virgin *Mary*, have occasion'd, in some amongst both, expressions, if not heretical, yet at least undecent. Thus a great many *Confessions of Faith* become, like *Noah's* Ark, a receptacle of clean and unclean: and which is also deplorable, they do, like ordinary Dyals, serve only for use in that one meridian for which they are calculated, and by riding twenty miles ye make them heterodox. I speak not this to the disparagement of our own Church, (which I reverence in all its Precepts and Practices) but to beget a blushing conviction in such as have diverted from it; and whose Conventicles, somewhere compared

compared with our *Jerusalem*, resemble only the removed huts of those who live apart, because they are sick of the Plague.

I am not at a maze, to see men so tenacious of contrary principles in Religion; for, man's thoughts being vast and various, he snatches at every offered suggestion; and if by accident he entertain any of those many, as a divine immission, he thereafter thinks it were blasphemy to bring that thought to the Test of *reason*, because he hears that *faith* is above *reason*; or to relinquish it, because the common suffrage of his Country ruins it counter, seeing he is taught even by them, that the principles of *belief* must not be chosen by the Pole.

And seeing *faith* is above *reason*, (albeit, as I said formerly, it would seem otherwise) I wonder not to see, even the best temper'd, Christians, think that which is not their own religion to be therefore ridiculous.

My

My design all alongst this Discourse butts at this one principle, *that Speculations in Religion are not so necessary, and are more dangerous than sincere practice.* It is in Religion as in Heraldry, the simpler the Bearing be, it is so much the purer and the ancienter. I will not say that our School-distinctions are the impressions of the devils cloven foot; but I may say, that our piety and principles scarce ever grow after they begin to fork in such dichotomies; which, like *Jacob* and *Esau*, divide and jar as soon as they are born, and betwixt whom, the poor proposition, out of which both did spring, is, like a maletactor, most lamentably drag'd to pieces. I have endeavoured to demonstrate, that dogmaticalness and paralytic scepticisme, are but the *Apocrypha* of true Religion; and I believe the one begets the other, as a toad begets a Cockatrice: For the Sceptic perceiving, that the magisterial Dogmatist erres (as those must erre somewhere

where who aſſert too much) even in thoſe things whereof he affirms, he is as ſure as of any principle in Religion, (which is their ordinary ſtile) he finding out their error in one of their principles, is thereby embold'ned to to contravert all. This being the ſcope of this Eſſay, I wiſh that thoſe who read, expound it as Divines do parables, *Quæ non ſunt argumentativa ultra ſuum ſcopum.*

CHAP. XXI.

The Author's Apology.

I Doubt not but ſome will think me no leſs abſurd in writing againſt vanity, whilſt I am ſo vain my ſelf as to write Books, than the Philoſophers were judged of old, for denying motion whilſt their tongues mov'd in their cheeks; but, to theſe my anſwer ſhall be, that finding many groveling in their errors, I have, in this Eſſay,

Eſſay, proffer'd, them my aſſiſtance; not to ſhew my *ſtrength* but my *compaſſion.* The multitude (which albeit it hath ever been allowed many heads yet was never allowed any brains) will doubtleſs accuſe my Studies of adultery, for hugging contemplations ſo excentric to my employment; to theſe my return is, that theſe papers are but the pairings of my other Studies; and becauſe they were but pairings, I have flung them out into the ſtreets. I wrote them in my retirements when I wanted both books and employment, and I reſolve that this ſhall be the laſt inroad I ſhall ever make into forreign contemplations. There are ſome thoughts in this piece which may ſeem to rebell againſt the empire of the Schools: yet, who knows but my Watch goes right, albeit it agree not with the public Clock of the City; eſpecially where the ſun of Righteouſneſs hath not, by pointing clearly the dyal of Faith, ſhewed which of the two are in the error?

error? There are some expressions in it, which censure may force to speak otherwise than they have in commissions; yet none of them got room in this Discourse, untill they first gave an account of their design to a most pious and learned Divine: and so, it may be the lines are of themselves streight, albeit they lye not parallel'd with each censurers crooked rule. As this Discourse intends, for the Divines of our Church, all respects; so all that is in it, is most freely submitted to their censure.

The Author intended this Discourse only as an Introduction to the Stoics Morals, *but probably, he will, for many years, stop here.*

POSTCRIPT.

BY the Laws of this Country p. 61. and elsewhere, the Author means that Religion which is setled by Law.

In other Expressions the Author recommends himself to the gloss of the readers charity.

The

The Contents of the Chapters.

CHAP.	Pag.
I. *Of Atheism*	1.
II. *Of Superstition*	21.
III. *Of the Worlds Creation*	26.
IV. *Of Eternity*	30.
V. *Of Providence*	32.
VI. *Of Theology*	54.
VII. *Of the strictness of Churches*	54.
VIII. *Of the Scriptures*	73.
IX. *Of the Moral Law*	85.
X. *Of the Judicial Law*	91.
XI. *Of Monsters*	103.
XII. *Of man and his Creation*	111.
XIII. *Of the Immortality of the Soul*	116.
XIV. *Of Faith and Reason*	131.
XV. *Of the fall of Angels, and what their sin was*	135.
XVI. *Of Man's fall*	141.
XVII. *Of the stile of Genesis*	152.
XVIII. *Why man fell*	154.
XIX. *A refutation of the Millenaries*	158.
XX. *The Author's censure of this Essay, and an Account of his design.*	159.
XXI. *The Author's Apology*	168.

FINIS.

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